

FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

Viet-Nam Training Center

BASIC COURSE STUDENT NOTEBOOK

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Basic Data

Cultural and Social Development  
Viet Cong

SECTION 2

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Department of State  
Washington, D. C.

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BASIC DATA - CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT





# REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM

## BACKGROUND NOTES

Population: 17 million (est.)

Capital: Saigon

The Republic of Viet-Nam is a narrow strip of land comprised of high hills, swamps, and rice-land curving along the South China Sea. The Kingdoms of Cambodia and Laos lie to the west. To the north, across the 17th parallel of latitude, lies the Communist-controlled zone of Viet-Nam, called the "Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam."

Topographically South Viet-Nam is divided into four main regions. The lower third of the country is dominated by the estuary of the Mekong River system, which gives the country a low, flat, and frequently marshy appearance. The soil in the Mekong Delta area is very rich, making this region the most productive agricultural area in the country, particularly in the production of rice. To the north and east of Saigon are the eastern Provinces of southern Viet-Nam. Topographically much more varied than the Mekong Delta area, they include considerable areas of low-lying tropical rain forest, upland forest, and the rugged terrain of the southern end of the Annamite Mountain chain. Central Viet-Nam is divided into a narrow coastal strip where intensive rice farming is practiced, and a broad plateau area separated by the Annamite chain.

While Saigon and the Mekong Delta to the south experience a year-round tropical climate, the central lowlands and mountainous regions are cool from about October to March, the temperature sometimes dropping to 50-55° F. Rainfall is heavy in the delta and highlands in the summer, and in the central lowlands in the winter.

South Viet-Nam's flag consists of three narrow red stripes on a yellow background; the stripes are placed horizontally across the middle portion of the flag.

### THE PEOPLE

The population of South Viet-Nam is about 17 million; it is increasing at the rate of about 2.8 percent annually.

The ethnic Vietnamese, who constitute about 90 percent of the population of South Viet-Nam, have a recorded history of more than 2,000 years. Throughout this long span they have been among the most vigorous people in Asia, and they are still characterized by remarkable drive and energy. Although physically and culturally related to the Chinese in many ways, the Vietnamese have always retained a strong sense of national

identity. In the past, these characteristics enabled them to survive as a nation despite hundreds of years of Chinese occupation.

Vietnamese culture is influenced by both classical Chinese and Indian civilizations, and nearly 100 years of French rule introduced important European elements. The first and probably still the most pervasive influence is Chinese. In 111 B.C., Viet-Nam was incorporated as the southernmost province of the Chinese empire, and the Vietnamese remained under Chinese rule for more than a millennium. Even after Viet-Nam regained its independence in 939 A.D., the Chinese influence persisted, and it continues today. Art forms and the Vietnamese language reveal many Chinese elements. The great importance of the family and the profound respect which the Vietnamese accord learning and age stem from the Confucian ethic. Nearly all rural people and many city Vietnamese continue to observe the traditional rites honoring their ancestors.

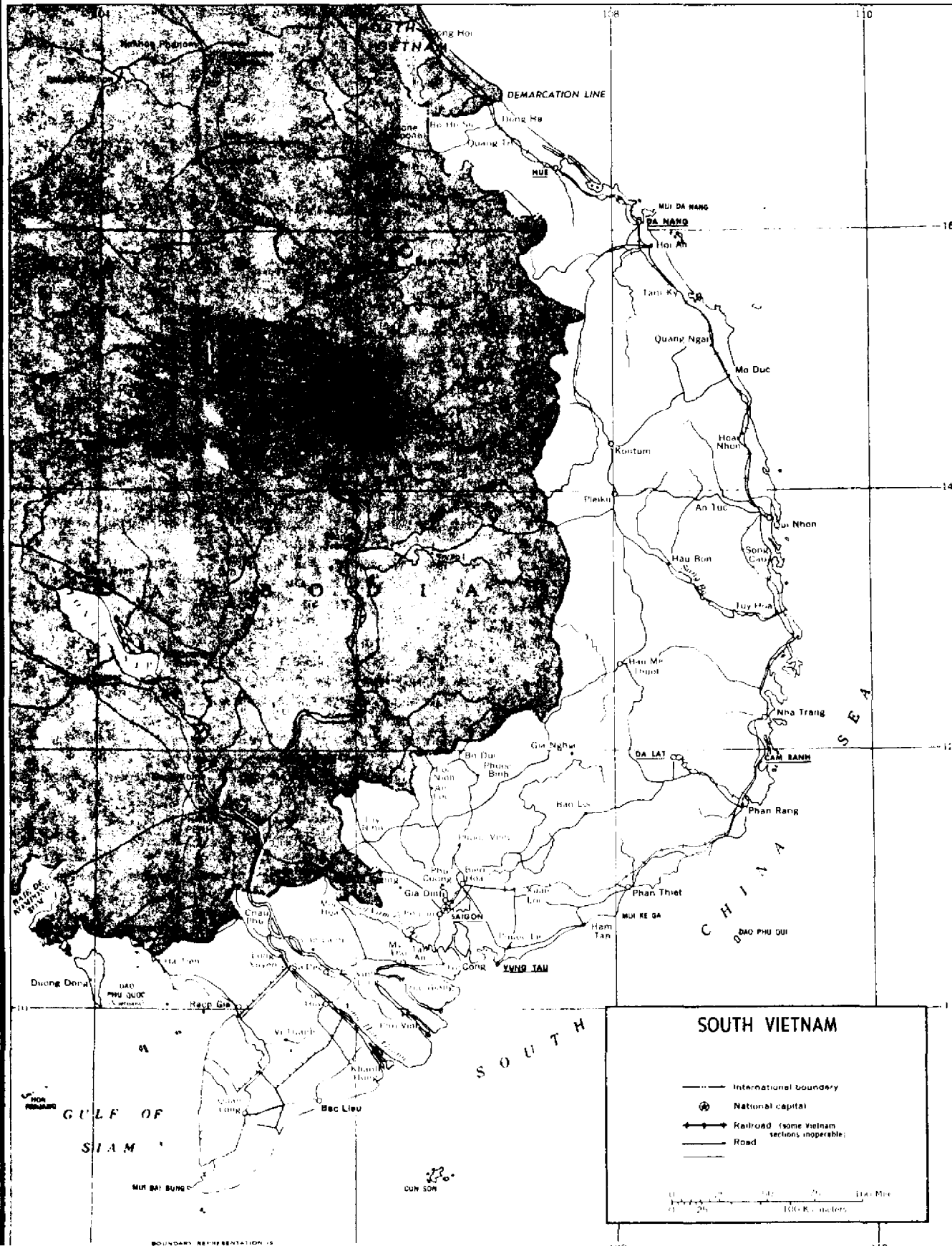
The religion of most Vietnamese is a mixture of Taoism and Mahayana Buddhism, both from China, plus animistic practices such as reverence for village guardian spirits. About 1.5 million Vietnamese are Roman Catholic.

There are several ethnic minorities in Viet-Nam, the most important being the mountain tribesmen or Montagnards, the Chinese, and the Cambodians. The Montagnards are composed of two main ethnic groups—Malayo-Polynesian and Mon-Khmer. They are divided into many tribes and live very primitive, seminomadic lives in the mountains and on the high plateaus. They number about 600,000.

Most of the Chinese minority of more than 1 million live in the cities of South Viet-Nam and have taken out Vietnamese citizenship. The majority of the 500,000 Vietnamese of Cambodian origin are farmers in the Provinces near the Cambodian border and at the mouth of the Mekong River system. They have been the subject of a recurring dispute between Cambodia, which claims they are mistreated by Vietnamese authorities, and the Government of Viet-Nam, which denies the charges. Other minority groups include a few thousand Chams, Malays, Indians, and French.

### HISTORY

Historical tradition states that the Vietnamese people originated in the valley of the Yellow River



in North China and that they were slowly driven southward by pressure from the Han Chinese. Historical records first pick up the Vietnamese as a tribal people inhabiting the Red River Delta in what is now North Viet-Nam. Today they occupy the entire eastern coast of the Indochinese peninsula from the border of China in the North to the Gulf of Thailand in the South—an area somewhat larger than New Mexico.

After gaining effective independence from China in the 16th century, the Vietnamese maintained their freedom until the mid-19th century, when the French established effective control over all of Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia, which they administered as Indochina. In 1940 Japanese troops moved into northern Viet-Nam as their first step in the conquest of Southeast Asia; in 1941 they moved into southern Viet-Nam and remained there until their surrender to the Allied Powers in 1945. In August 1945 a Communist-led uprising broke out and the "Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam" was proclaimed with a veteran Communist, Ho Chi Minh, as its leader. A prolonged three-way struggle ensued among the Vietnamese Communists led by Ho Chi Minh, the French, and the Vietnamese nationalists nominally led by Emperor Bao Dai. The Communists sought to portray their struggle as a national uprising; the French attempted to reestablish their control; while Bao Dai's nationalists, who chose to fight militarily with the French against the Communists, wished neither French nor Communist domination. Ho's Viet Minh forces fought a highly successful guerrilla campaign and eventually controlled almost all of rural Viet-Nam. The French military disaster at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, and the conference at Geneva, where France signed an armistice in July 1954, marked the end of the 8-year war and French colonial rule in Indochina.

The conference at Geneva was attended by delegates from Cambodia, the "Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam," France, Laos, Communist China, the State of Viet-Nam (led by Bao Dai and recognized by the United States and many other countries), the Soviet Union, and Great Britain. The United States attended the conference but was not a signatory to the agreements. However, the U.S. delegate, Gen. W. Bedell Smith, stated that our policy with regard to the Geneva agreements would be to refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb the agreements and that the United States would view any renewal of aggression in violation of the agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security. The Geneva agreements provided for provisional division of Viet-Nam approximately at the 17th parallel, called for an end to all hostilities, and set up an International Control Commission (representatives of Canada, India, and Poland) to supervise execution of the agreements.

Following the conclusion of the July 1954 Geneva accords, South Viet-Nam experienced a period of considerable confusion. Although Bao Dai had appointed a well-known nationalist figure, Ngo

Dinh Diem, as Prime Minister, Diem initially had to administer a country whose economy was ruined and whose political life was fragmented by rivalries of religious sects and political factions. In the ensuing 9 years Diem was able to consolidate his political position, eliminate the private armies of the religious sects, and, with substantial American military and economic aid, build a national army and administration and make significant progress toward reconstructing the economy.

Ngo Dinh Diem, however, ultimately failed to develop broad-based political support and alienated many influential religious, political, and military groups. Opposition to his government steadily increased.

The Communists in North Viet-Nam, having consolidated their power by ruthless and thoroughgoing "agrarian reform" and establishment of an efficient and merciless police state, began in 1959 to take action to overthrow the Government of South Viet-Nam, with the aim of reuniting the country under Communist auspices. In their efforts they carefully exploited existing grievances created by the policies of the Diem government as well as age-old shortcomings of Vietnamese society such as poverty and land hunger. By 1963 the Communists had made significant progress in building a subversive apparatus in South Viet-Nam, had organized a Communist-controlled "National Front for the Liberation of South Viet-Nam," and had recruited formidable guerrilla units which made the countryside increasingly insecure.

The Diem government seriously misjudged the significance of religious unrest which broke out in central Viet-Nam in May 1963. The unrest was related to the treatment of Buddhists, the largest single religious group in the country. Other oppositionists to Diem made common cause with the Buddhists, and on November 1, 1963, the Diem government was overthrown by a military uprising in the course of which Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, were killed.

The Diem government was replaced by a provisional government in which Maj. Gen. Duong Van Minh was Chief of State, and former Vice President Nguyen Ngoc Tho was Prime Minister. This government in turn was replaced on January 30, 1964, by one led by Maj. Gen. Nguyen Khanh. After approximately a year of military control of the government under Generals Minh and Khanh, and 8 months of civilian control under Prime Ministers Huong and Quat, Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky became Prime Minister on June 19, 1965.

A period of constitutional evolution during the prime ministership of Ky culminated in legislative and presidential vice presidential elections in the fall of 1967. Nguyen Van Thieu was elected President and Nguyen Cao Ky was elected Vice President.

## GOVERNMENT

South Viet-Nam has been a republic since 1955, when the people chose the republican form of

government in a national referendum. From 1956 to 1963 the country was governed under a constitution which provided for a strong executive, a unicameral assembly, and a judicial system. The Constitution of 1956 was abrogated on November 1, 1963, as a consequence of the coup d'etat which overthrew President Diem. This constitution was replaced on November 4, 1963, by "Provisional Charter No. 1," which provided that Viet-Nam remain a republic and that legislative and executive powers be centralized in the Military Revolutionary Council, pending adoption of a new constitution. On November 6 a provisional cabinet was installed in office under Prime Minister Tho. A Council of Sages (later renamed Council of Notables) was authorized to be established with the task of advising the government.

On January 30, 1964, Gen. Nguyen Khanh replaced Gen. Duong Van Minh as Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Council. Prime Minister Tho resigned and General Khanh was installed as Prime Minister on February 8. In order to restore civilian leadership, the Military Revolutionary Council dissolved itself on August 27, 1964. A triumvirate of generals provided the leadership of government during the transition to civilian control. This caretaker triumvirate was composed of General Khanh, General Minh, and General Tran Thien Khiem. A Provisional Charter was promulgated on October 20, 1964, by the triumvirate which established the statutes and institutions for the resumption of civilian government.

Tran Van Huong, the Mayor of Saigon, took office as Prime Minister on November 4, 1964. Phan Khac Suu, a widely respected elder statesman, assumed the position of Chief of State. The caretaker triumvirate reinstituted civilian control by the appointment of a High National Council to act as a temporary legislative body. However, the Vietnamese Armed Forces Council abolished the High National Council on December 20, 1964; and in the face of mounting opposition to the new government, the Armed Forces Council asked Prime Minister Huong to resign on January 27, 1965.

Dr. Phan Huy Quat, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, organized a new government and assumed office on February 16, 1965. Mr. Suu continued as the Chief of State, and the National Legislative Council was established to act as Viet-Nam's legislature.

The civilian government dissolved itself on June 11, 1965, when an impasse developed over a constitutional dispute as to the meaning of the Provisional Charter. The civilians asked the armed forces to assume power in order that the constitutional problem could be resolved and no delay would result in the prosecution of the war. The armed forces announced on June 19 the formation of the Congress of the Armed Forces composed of the general officers of the Vietnamese armed forces. The June 19 Convention of the Armed Forces abolished the Provisional Charter of October 20, 1964, and other laws contrary to the Convention.

Subordinate to the Congress of the Armed Forces

was the Directorate--composed of 10 civilians and 10 generals--which was entrusted with the exercise of power and the direction of the affairs of the Government. The Chairman of the Directorate, General Thieu, was in effect the Chief of State, while the Commissioner for the Executive, Nguyen Cao Ky, acted as Prime Minister.

On April 14, 1966, the Vietnamese Government announced that constituent assembly elections would be held in the summer or fall of that year. Despite an all-out boycott of the elections by the Communists, and threats and violence against the voters, about 80 percent of those who had registered for the election went to the polls. On September 27 the Assembly convened and began deliberation on the Constitution it was to draft and finally approve on March 18, 1967. The Constitution took effect on April 1, 1967.

The Constitution calls for a modified presidential system. The President, as Chief of State, designates a Prime Minister and Cabinet to manage governmental business. A bicameral National Assembly and an independent judiciary exercise legislative and judicial powers respectively. The Assembly can override a presidential veto of a bill by an absolute majority of the total membership of both Houses. It can also cause the removal of any or all Cabinet ministers, including the Prime Minister, by a two-thirds majority (or three-fourths if the President disagrees).

The new Constitution also contains extensive civil rights and welfare provisions and provides for election of local as well as national officials.

Under the terms of the Constitution, some 4.8 million South Vietnamese--nearly 60 percent of the entire voting-age population--cast ballots on September 3, 1967, to elect a President, Vice President, and Upper House of the National Assembly. The Lower House was elected on October 22, 1967, by a large vote that almost equaled the number of ballots cast in the September elections.

On October 31, 1967, successful candidates Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky were inaugurated President and Vice President. The 60-member Upper House and the 137-member Lower House first convened in October and November.

## ECONOMY

A prime goal of the Viet Cong has been to weaken the economy of South Viet-Nam by disrupting industrial and agricultural development, transportation, and commerce. Despite this, the Government of South Viet-Nam, with free-world assistance, is mounting an effort to increase its economic strength. While progress is being made in the economic sector, much still remains to be done.

## Agriculture; Natural Resources; Industry

The South Vietnamese economy is primarily agricultural. Almost 70 percent of the total



population live in rural areas, and the fertile land is capable of producing a food supply sufficient for internal needs as well as a surplus for export. The Government of South Viet-Nam is engaged in a comprehensive rural construction program (Revolutionary Development), which has among its goals increased agricultural productivity and eradication of land tenure abuses.

Floods and Communist interference with normal marketing have changed South Viet-Nam's historic role as an exporter of its principal food and cash crop, rice. In 1963 exports reached 340,000 metric tons; in 1966 more than 400,000 metric tons were imported. Other agricultural products include kenaf (similar to jute), maize, sugar cane, tobacco, tea, and coffee.

Aside from its fertile soil, fish and rubber are South Viet-Nam's main natural resources. The fish catch, often the only protein supplement to the rice diet, has increased from 165,000 tons in 1959 to more than 400,000 tons in 1966; consequently, fish exports are increasing steadily. And, although the Viet Cong have destroyed many rubber plantations, they have not been able to prevent South Viet-Nam from being a significant exporter of rubber.

Before Viet-Nam was divided, almost all of its industry was in the North. Until the Communist Tet offensive in January-February 1968, South Viet-Nam had in operation more than 800 new or rehabilitated factories—textile, cement, pharmaceutical, plastic, paint—employing 75,000 workers and contributing one-fourth of the gross national product. As a result of the Tet offensive, 34 plants were damaged in varying degree. Of these, 19 were textile factories. An estimated 10,755 workers were left unemployed.

## Inflation

Budget deficit financing of sharply increased defense expenditures, massive spending of foreign troops and associated military construction, Viet Cong interference with the economy, and growing labor shortages have triggered inflationary pressures. The Government of South Viet-Nam is currently enforcing a difficult stabilization program—devaluing its currency, employing budgetary restraint, and overhauling its fiscal system.

## Free-World Assistance

In fiscal years 1954-67, the dollar value of U.S. economic and technical assistance to South Viet-Nam was more than \$3 billion. U.S. economic aid now averages annually close to \$500 million; this does not include substantial Public Law 480 ("Food for Freedom") imports. Thirty-one other free-world countries have provided economic and/or technical assistance to the South Vietnamese. The United Nations also provides technical assistance.

## PROBLEM OF COMMUNIST AGGRESSION

Following the partition of Viet-Nam under the terms of the Geneva accords, the Communist leaders in Hanoi had expected the South to collapse and come under their control. In 1956, when they realized that the country instead was making rapid progress, they began a deliberate campaign to overthrow the Government of South Viet-Nam and take power by force. First they reactivated the network of Communists who had stayed in the South along with hidden stocks of arms. Then they began to exploit the growing resentment toward the authoritarian methods of the Diem government and the age-old shortcomings of Vietnamese society such as poverty and land hunger. They infiltrated additional cadres of trained guerrillas into the South and began a campaign of terror against officials and villagers who refused to support the Communist cause. Civilian deaths from assassination and terrorist raids have amounted to tens of thousands since the beginning of the conflict.

North Vietnamese efforts against South Vietnamese became pronounced during the next few years. In 1960 the Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communists) organized the so-called National Liberation Front, controlled from Hanoi through the Communist Party organization. With leaders, supplies, and reinforcements from the North, they stepped up their attempt to destroy the social, economic, and governmental structure of the South by atrocities, terror, and guerrilla warfare. In 1964 Hanoi decided that the Viet Cong cadres and their supporters were not succeeding quickly enough, and ordered regular units of the North Vietnamese Army into South Viet-Nam. Today, infiltration of regular troops into the South continues by the thousands each month.

Under this heavy attack, South Viet-Nam appealed for help. As a result, military units to help in its defense have been sent by the United States, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Thailand.

Some 700,000 South Vietnamese in uniform today are supported by more than 500,000 U.S. troops and more than 60,000 other free-world soldiers. The United States and South Vietnamese forces, beginning in 1965, conducted airstrikes against military targets in North Viet-Nam. Along with 31 other free-world nations, the U.S. has furnished economic, technical, and humanitarian assistance to South Viet-Nam.

No nation faces a greater test than South Viet-Nam today. It is striving to develop its own popularly approved political institutions, to modernize and expand its economy, and to improve the living standards of its people, while resisting a large-scale military invasion and a terrorist campaign.

## PEACE EFFORTS

Efforts to initiate direct contact with North Viet-Nam to try to find a peaceful solution in

Viet-Nam were finally successful when on May 3, 1968, the United States and North Viet-Nam announced they would send representatives to begin official conversations in Paris.

This development came after unremitting efforts since 1965 by the Republic of Viet-Nam, the United States, many foreign governments, and leaders such as the Pope and the United Nations Secretary General to find a way toward peace.

At Manila in October 1966 the Republic of Viet-Nam, the United States and five other troop-contributing nations met and decided on common policy for a peaceful settlement in Viet-Nam. In the Manila Conference Communique, the representatives of the seven nations expressed their determination to seek a peaceful solution in Viet-Nam while ensuring that the Vietnamese people would not be conquered by aggressive force and would have the right to choose their own way of life and their own form of government. The Government of Viet-Nam set forth its views as to six essential elements for peace, including the cessation of aggression, preservation of the territorial integrity of South Viet-Nam, reunification of Viet-Nam, removal of allied military forces, effective international guarantees, and the resolution of internal problems by a program of "national reconciliation" of all elements of society to move forward through the democratic process toward lasting peace.

On March 31, 1968, President Johnson announced that the United States was unilaterally stopping the bombing over 78 percent of the land area of North Viet-Nam, containing almost 90 percent of the population, and recalled his statement at San Antonio the preceding September—that we would stop the bombardment of North Viet-Nam when that would lead promptly to productive discussions, and that we would assume North Viet-Nam would not take military advantage of our restraint. The President said further that the limited bombing of the North could come to an end if our restraint was matched by Hanoi.

The North Vietnamese authorities on April 3 took note of the President's speech and said they would send a representative to make contact with an American representative. The first meeting between the U.S. representatives, Ambassadors W. Averell Harriman and Cyrus Vance, and the North Vietnamese representative, Minister Xuan Thuy, took place in Paris on May 13, 1968.

The United States is in close contact with the Republic of Viet-Nam and its other allies on all aspects of the official conversations in Paris. Both the Vietnamese Government and the United States have indicated that once the official conversations proceed beyond the present initial

phase to the point where political matters in South Viet-Nam are likely to be discussed, the Government of South Viet-Nam would participate in the talks.

## PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS\*

President—Nguyen Van Thieu  
Vice President—Nguyen Cao Ky  
Prime Minister—Tran Van Huong  
Minister of State and Inspector General—Mai Tho Truyen  
Minister of State—Vu Quoc Thuc  
Minister of Foreign Affairs—Tran Chanh Thanh

South Viet-Nam maintains an Embassy in the United States at 2251 R Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008. South Viet-Nam's Ambassador to the United States is Bui Diem.

\*See Section 2 for Cabinet as of Sept. 1969

## PRINCIPAL U. S. OFFICIALS\*

Ambassador—Ellsworth Bunker  
Deputy Ambassador—Samuel D. Berger  
Commander of U.S. Military Assistance Command/Viet-Nam (MACV)—General Creighton Abrams  
Deputy to COMUSMACV for Pacification—Wm. E. Colby  
Minister-Counselor for Political Affairs—Martin Her  
Counselor for Economic Affairs—Robert Harlan  
Counselor for Administration—Theo Hall

American Consul General—Charles S. Kennedy, Jr.  
Director, U.S. AID Mission—Donald G. MacDonald  
Director, Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office—Edward J. Nickel

The U.S. Embassy is located No. 4 Thong Nhut, Saigon.

\*As of October 1969

## READING LIST

Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Viet-Nam, U.S. Foreign Relations Committee, March 1966.  
Buttinger, Joseph, The Smaller Dragon, New York, Praeger, 1958.  
Documents Relating to British Involvement in the Indo-China Conflict 1945-1965, United Kingdom.  
Fall, Bernard, The Two Viet-Nams, New York, Praeger, 1963.  
Pike, Douglas, The Viet Cong, Cambridge, MIT Press.

## VIET-NAM INFORMATION NOTES

Viet-Nam Information Notes is a series of Department of State publications, each of which summarizes the most significant available material on one important aspect of the situation in Viet-Nam. Viet-Nam Information Notes are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, for 5¢ each (with a 25 percent discount for quantities of 100 or more copies of any one Note mailed to the same address). Remittances, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, must accompany orders.

### PRESENTLY AVAILABLE ...

1. Basic Data on South Viet-Nam (Dept. of State pub. 8195) summarizes general information on the land, people, history, government, and economy of the country.
2. The Search for Peace in Viet-Nam (Dept. of State pub. 8196) reviews the efforts of individuals, governments, and international bodies to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict in Viet-Nam. The policy of the Government of North Viet-Nam with regard to a peaceful settlement is included.
3. Communist-Directed Forces in South Viet-Nam (Dept. of State pub. 8197) seeks to answer such questions as: What is the Viet Cong? Who are its leaders? How is it related to party and government organs of North Viet-Nam? What are the Communists' objectives? Their strengths? Their weaknesses?
4. Free World Assistance for South Viet-Nam (Dept. of State pub. 8213) describes the scope of the international aid program for the Republic of Viet-Nam. It gives facts and figures about the contributions of 36 participating nations (U.S. aid is not included—a separate Note is to be devoted to that subject).
5. Political Development in South Viet-Nam (Dept. of State pub. 8231) discusses South Viet-Nam's steady progress toward an elected government and representative institutions at all levels of government.
6. Why We Fight in Viet-Nam (Dept. of State pub. 8245) describes the origin of the conflict and the principal reasons for U. S. involvement.
7. Viet-Cong Terror Tactics in South Viet-Nam (Dept. of State pub. 8259) describes the deliberate campaign of terror by which the Viet-Cong hope to break the resistance of South Viet-Nam.
8. National Reconciliation in South Viet-Nam (Dept. of State pub. 8260) describes the Chieu-Hoi, or Open Arms, program of the Government of South Viet-Nam.
9. Prisoners of War (Dept. of State pub. 8275) explains the special status of prisoners of war under the Geneva convention, allied treatment of prisoners and efforts to discuss with North Viet-Nam and the Communist National Liberation Front repatriation, exchange, and other matters pertinent to prisoners of war.
10. Legal Basis for U.S. Military Aid to South Viet-Nam (Dept. of State pub. 8285) discusses the well-established points of law and fact which are the legal basis for the U.S. military commitment in South Viet-Nam.
11. Opinions of Asian and Pacific Leaders (Dept. of State pub. 8363). The leaders of the countries most immediately concerned about the future of Viet-Nam express their views on: the U.S. commitment, the nature of the war, North Vietnamese and Chinese involvement, peace efforts, and regional goals beyond the war.
12. Wars of National Liberation (Dept. of State pub. 8384) discusses the origins and characteristics of national liberation wars, Soviet and Chinese involvement in Viet-Nam, and U.S. counterstrategy.

Several other Viet-Nam Information Notes will be available in the near future. The Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, on request, will place individuals on its mailing list to receive Selected United States Government Publications—a free, biweekly announcement of new publications, including subsequent numbers of this series.

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## BASIC DATA ON NORTH VIET-NAM\*

Population: 20 million (official 1970 est.)  
Capital: Hanoi (pop.: 1 million)

North Viet-Nam, or the "Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam," with a land area of 61,300 square miles (slightly larger than Georgia), is the smallest country on the Southeast Asian peninsula. It is bounded on the north by Communist China, on the west by the Kingdom of Laos, and on the south by the Republic of Viet-Nam. The Gulf of Tonkin lies to the east. About half the land area of North Viet-Nam is covered by forest; about 15 percent is cultivated.

Most of North Viet-Nam is mountainous or hilly, particularly the northern and north-western sections. The rugged highland areas are covered by a thick jungle canopy. The lowlands consist principally of the Red River delta and the coastal plains, which extend northeast and south from the delta. Heavily populated and intensively cultivated, the lowlands are almost entirely covered by rice-fields. Much of the delta region is seasonally flooded; a complex network of dikes and levees throughout this "ricebowl" prevents serious flooding damage.

North Viet-Nam has a monsoonal climate—a hot and humid wet season from mid-May to mid-September (the southwest monsoon), a relatively warm and humid dry season from mid-October to mid-March (the northeast monsoon), and two short transitional seasons. From late December through April the climate of the coastal lowlands and adjacent mountain slopes is dominated by a phenomenon called "crachin," a prolonged period of widespread cloudiness, fog, and drizzle. The seasonal pattern is somewhat different in the southern "panhandle" where the monsoon is shorter and comes later in the year.

North Viet-Nam's flag displays a single yellow star on a red background.

### THE PEOPLE

Between 80 and 90 percent of North Viet-Nam's 20 million people are ethnic Vietnamese. The remainder, almost all of whom live in the mountainous areas of the north and west, are members of the Muong, Thai, Meo,



*North Vietnamese peasants planting rice in southern province of Quang Binh.*

and a number of smaller tribes. The population is concentrated in the Red River delta area where Hanoi, the capital, and Haiphong, the principal port, are located. The Government reports an annual growth rate of 3.5 percent.

Vietnamese is the principal language. The ethnic minority groups speak a variety of tribal languages, while the overseas Chinese, an estimated 200,000 persons living mainly in

\*Text based on the Department of State's Background Notes on North Viet-Nam. Background Notes is a series of short, factual pamphlets (more than 150) on the major countries and territories of the world. For further information write to: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.



the delta, speak various southern Chinese dialects. Most older educated North Vietnamese can speak French, a legacy of the colonial era. Russian has become the principal technical language as many young North Vietnamese have received training in the Soviet Union. Both Russian and Chinese are taught in the secondary schools. Hanoi claims that more than 95 percent of the population is literate.

The Government administers all educational facilities, and the Lao Dong (Communist) Party maintains a system of political controls which permeates both academic and extra-curricular activities of young people. North Viet-Nam inherited from the French a system which emphasized the liberal arts. Hanoi has changed this emphasis to applied sciences and vocational training. There are about 10,000 "general educational program" (i.e., primary and secondary) schools in North Viet-Nam. Hanoi University is the principal center of higher learning, and there are many technical and scientific schools as well as political training institutions for party and government personnel. In addition, North Viet-Nam in recent years has sent about 25,000 students to the Soviet Union and other Communist countries under various bilateral technical assistance programs.

North Viet-Nam has a long Buddhist tradition, but the practice of religion except in Communist Party-prescribed fashions has been circumscribed. The Government has, however, tolerated Buddhist activities to some extent, particularly among the older generation. Presumably it hopes succeeding generations can be educated to discard the traditions of Buddhism in favor of the precepts of "scientific socialism."

Before 1954 there were more than 1.4 million Roman Catholics in North Viet-Nam. About half fled to the South after the Geneva agreements of 1954 called for temporary division of Viet-Nam, with Communist forces grouped in the North. North Vietnamese leaders view the Roman Catholic Church with great suspicion because it was outspokenly anti-Communist during the preindependence period, and because it is the most cohesive non-Communist group in North Viet-Nam.

## GOVERNMENT

North Viet-Nam's Constitution, adopted in 1960, presents the Hanoi government as a representative democracy and claims adherence to such principles as separation of powers, an independent judiciary, universal suffrage, and human rights. It contains a long list of civil liberties which are to be guaranteed if their exercise does not damage the interests of the state.

In reality, legislative and executive authority is combined, and, even in the official governmental structure, the judiciary is subordinated to both other "branches."

The highest legislative organ is the National Assembly, members of which are supposed to be elected every 4 years. The Assembly meets twice yearly and theoretically exercises wide lawmaking and appointive authority. In practice, however, it simply gives formal approval to proposals of executive organs. A permanent Standing Committee is empowered to act for the Assembly when it is not in session. Other legislative bodies, called People's Councils, are elected at province, district, and village levels. As in all Communist-run elections, council candidates are selected by the party. The councils choose administrative committees which handle the day-to-day business on the local level and are ultimately responsible to the Premier of North Viet-Nam and his Council of Ministers. Thus the committee's function is more executive than it is legislative.

The most important centers of power within the North Vietnamese Government are the executive agencies—the President; the Premier; the Council of Ministers (almost all of whom are members of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee); and the administrative committees described above. According to the Constitution, the President is appointed by the National Assembly, and he in turn appoints the Premier and the various ministers. The present Council of Ministers comprises about 30 members, six of whom are also members of the party's highest policymaking body, the Central Committee's Politburo. The key ministries—defense, foreign affairs, and public security (police)—are all headed by Politburo members. The number of non-Communists on the Council has decreased since the first years of the regime as the number of highly trained and competent party members has increased.

As in other Communist countries, the most important political institution in North Viet-Nam is the party, the Dang Lao Dong Viet-Nam (Viet-Nam Worker's Party) or Lao Dong Party. With the exception of Party First Secretary Le Duan, all Politburo members concurrently hold high positions in the Government. This is also the case at the lower levels of government where province, district, and village party officials dominate the administrative councils.

Prior to his death on September 3, 1969, Ho Chi Minh was President of North Viet-Nam and Chairman of the Party Central Committee. The Presidency became largely honorific when Ton Duc Thang replaced Ho. The party is now under the "collective leadership" of the Politburo which is headed by Party First Secretary Le Duan, who has a "first among equals" status. No one has replaced Ho as Chairman of the Central Committee.

## HISTORY/POLITICAL CONDITIONS

In 111 B.C. ancestors of the present-day Vietnamese, who inhabited part of what is now southern China and northern North Viet-Nam, were conquered by forces of China's Han dynasty. Chinese rule lasted more than 1,000 years, until 939 A.D., when the Vietnamese ousted their conquerors and began a southward expansion which was to take them all the way to the Gulf of Siam. However, nominal Chinese suzerainty over Viet-Nam continued until the arrival of the French in the mid-19th century.

At the beginning of the 17th century Viet-Nam split into two hostile states, divided at a point just above the present demarcation zone. They were reunited in the 19th century when factional difficulties became less acute.

### French Colonization

Throughout the first half of the 19th century, Western (primarily French) traders and missionaries attempted to expand their influence in Indochina (Laos, Cambodia, and Viet-Nam). The Vietnamese rulers of the time were of an isolationist and xenophobic bent and actively resisted these incursions.

Citing what it felt was growing persecution of the country's 300,000 Christians by the Vietnamese rulers, France attacked and in 1858 occupied the port of Tourane, now called Da Nang. Religious and commercial problems continued, and the French extended their control over the Vietnamese. Cochinchina—now the southern third of South Viet-Nam—was made a French colony in 1867. In 1884 Annam and Tonkin—central and northern Viet-Nam—became French protectorates after France defeated Vietnamese and Chinese forces in Tonkin. French control over Viet-Nam was greatly circumscribed during the Japanese occupation which began in 1940, and in March 1945 Japan took complete control.

Throughout the French colonial period, but especially after 1920, nationalist and revolutionary groups operated openly and clandestinely in Viet-Nam. By far the best organized and most disciplined of these groups was the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth League and its successor, the Indochinese Communist Party.

### Origins of Vietnamese Communism

The Vietnamese Communist movement began in Paris in 1920, when a man called Nguyen Van Thanh, one of the first of at least a dozen pseudonyms used by Ho Chi Minh, became a charter member of the French Communist Party. In 1922 Ho Chi Minh went to Moscow to study Marxist doctrine and later to Canton to serve the Chinese revolutionary government. While in China he formed the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth League, setting the stage

for the formation of the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930. Official North Vietnamese sources say the party was founded on instructions from the Moscow-based Communist International (Comintern).

French authorities jailed much of the party leadership in 1930, after its abortive attempts to establish "soviets" (agricultural communes) in Nghe An Province. Ho Chi Minh was abroad at that time but was imprisoned later in Hong Kong by the British. He was released in 1933, and in 1936 a new French government released his compatriots who, at the outset of World War II, fled to China. There they were joined by Ho, who formed the Viet Minh, which was purportedly a coalition of all anti-French Vietnamese groups. Official North Vietnamese publications state that the Viet Minh was founded and led by the Indochinese Communist Party.

### World War II Years

Although some Vietnamese nationalists joined the Viet Minh, the more influential ones remained aloof. Like Ho Chi Minh and his colleagues, they had fled to the Chinese border province of Kwangsi. In October 1942 Chinese Kuomintang generals invited all major non-Communist factions of Vietnamese nationalism to a conference in Kwangsi to form a "government-in-exile." The organization which emerged from this conference, known as the Viet-Nam Cach Menh Dong Minh Hoi (Viet-Nam Revolutionary League) or Dong Minh Hoi, was fragmented, poorly led, and generally ineffectual in comparison with the Viet Minh which had good leadership, a tight organization, and an established network of party agents and bases in Viet-Nam.

The Dong Minh Hoi's Kuomintang mentors decided, therefore, to seek union of the two organizations. In early 1943, to effect the rapprochement, Ho Chi Minh, who had been imprisoned by the Chinese a year before, was released. Nominally merged with the Dong Minh Hoi, the Viet Minh played a largely independent role, strengthening its military and political organization in Viet Nam. Its non-Communist partners merely awaited the day when the Kuomintang would carry them to power.

The Viet Minh, then, with the only effective Vietnamese military force, was able to fill the vacuum created by the Japanese coup de force of March 9, 1945, which virtually eliminated French authority in northern Viet-Nam. On August 16, the day after "V-J Day," Ho Chi Minh severed ties with the "Viet-Nam Provisional Republican Government" formed at a Dong Minh Hoi congress in March 1944, and established the "Viet-Nam National Liberation Committee." At the same time, Viet Minh guerrillas were transformed into the "Liberation Army." When Ho Chi Minh and his Viet Minh units entered Hanoi, they were greeted with an outpouring of support from enthusiastic

masses who did not know (and might well have been little concerned) that their liberators were Communist-led. Considerable time elapsed before Ho Chi Minh publicly acknowledged that he was "Nguyen Ai Quoc," the founder of the Indochinese Communist Party.

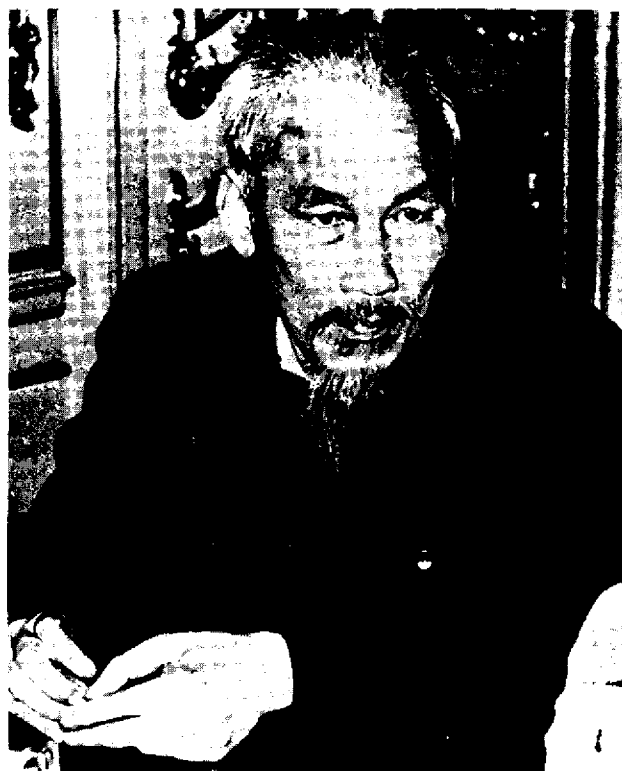
#### The "Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam"

On August 29, 1945, Ho Chi Minh formed his first government, mainly from members of the National Liberation Committee. Of the 14 Committee members, 11 belonged to the party or had some connection with the Viet Minh. Ho kept the Presidency and the foreign ministry for himself and awarded to party or Viet Minh members the posts of interior (police), national defense, finance, propaganda, health, and labor. The ministries of youth, justice, and education were given to members of the Democratic Party—a Viet Minh affiliate since its founding in 1944—and nonparty men received the posts of national economy, social welfare, and public works. On September 2, Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and presented his new government to a mass rally in Hanoi.

It had been decided at the Potsdam conference of July 1945 that the Chinese would accept the surrender of Japanese forces above the 16th parallel, and that the British would accept the surrender to the south of the line. The Chinese moved into the North in September 1945, bringing with them the nationalists of the Dong Minh Hoi and the Viet-Nam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD), or Viet-Nam Nationalist Party. In the meantime, Ho Chi Minh's regime was consolidating its position not only by political indoctrination, the extension of police controls, and the liquidation of opponents, but also through an impressive mobilization of labor to repair the dike system, restore agricultural production, and otherwise cope with widespread famine and economic breakdown.

To ensure the cooperation of the Dong Minh Hoi and the VNQDD in the elections for the first National Assembly, Ho Chi Minh promised them two ministries and the vice presidency. As newcomers unable to campaign effectively in the time that remained before the elections, the nationalist parties were also promised 70 of the 380 Assembly seats regardless of actual election results. The Viet Minh ran its component parts (Democratic Party, Socialists, and Marxists) separately and received the overwhelming majority of the votes. In reality, the coalition existed only in Hanoi, and only on the surface there. In the countryside little had changed. Communist and non-Communist groups maintained their respective strongholds and attacked each others' cadres, kidnaping and assassinating.

The non-Communist nationalists were doomed by the Franco-Chinese treaty of February 1946 which provided for withdrawal of Chinese forces and entry of French troops. Both



*The late Ho Chi Minh.*

the VNQDD and the Dong Minh Hoi felt they could preserve their militantly anti-French image only by demonstrating open hostility toward French forces. Their violent tactics eventually led to combined French-Viet Minh operations against nationalist strongholds, which, without Chinese protection and support, collapsed and were taken over by the Viet Minh. These operations, plus police action against individual "noncooperative" nationalists, virtually destroyed the effective power of the nationalist parties. The Viet Minh's rivals, although dubbed "reactionaries" by the Communists, had been far more militantly anti-colonial during this period than the Viet Minh, which had openly allied itself with the "colonialists" (the French) to crush the nationalists.

In May 1946 the party formed a larger front around the Viet Minh which had by this time become known for its Communist association. The Lien Viet, or "Popular National Front," encompassed all organizations and parties—even elements of the VNQDD and Dong Minh Hoi. [The Viet Minh officially disappeared in 1951 when, strengthened by direct contact with the victorious Communist Chinese forces, the party decided to come back in the open—this time under the name of Dang Lao Dong Viet-Nam (Viet-Nam Workers' Party). In September 1955 the Lien Viet was replaced by the Viet-Nam Fatherland Front, which still exists in North Viet-Nam.]

The National Assembly met on October 28, 1946, and elected a new government which was



more openly Communist than the preceding one but still contained some non-Communist elements. The Assembly also passed a new "democratic" constitution (which was never promulgated); elected a Communist-controlled Permanent Committee; and gave the Permanent Committee power to vote government bills, convoke parliament, control the Government, and decide war and peace. The Assembly did not meet again until December 1953, although it was never formally dissolved.

By the end of 1946 non-Communist nationalist elements had been neutralized or destroyed in the North and severely weakened in the rest of the country. Of the 70 VNQDD and Dong Minh Hoi Assembly deputies, only 20 remained at the close of the Assembly on November 9. All but two of these had voted with the Viet Minh during the session; one of the two "noncooperators" was arrested, the other went into hiding.

When open and large-scale hostilities broke out with the French in December 1946, Ho Chi Minh and his party were firmly in control of the Vietnamese independence movement in the North and in some other parts of Viet-Nam.

#### The Indochina War

The Communist Party under Ho Chi Minh was officially disbanded from 1945-51, although party business continued under the name "Association for Marxist Studies." A Hanoi publication later reported: "From 1945 to 1954, it [the party] organized and led the war of resistance to defend the people's power and defeat the French colonialists."

In a March 1946 accord France recognized the "Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam" as a free state within the French Union and agreed to withdraw its troops gradually from Viet-Nam. Dissension continued and increased, however, and on November 26 fighting broke out in Haiphong. On the following day the French bombarded Haiphong's Vietnamese

quarter, and on December 19 the Vietnamese attacked French positions in Hanoi and were driven out after bitter fighting.

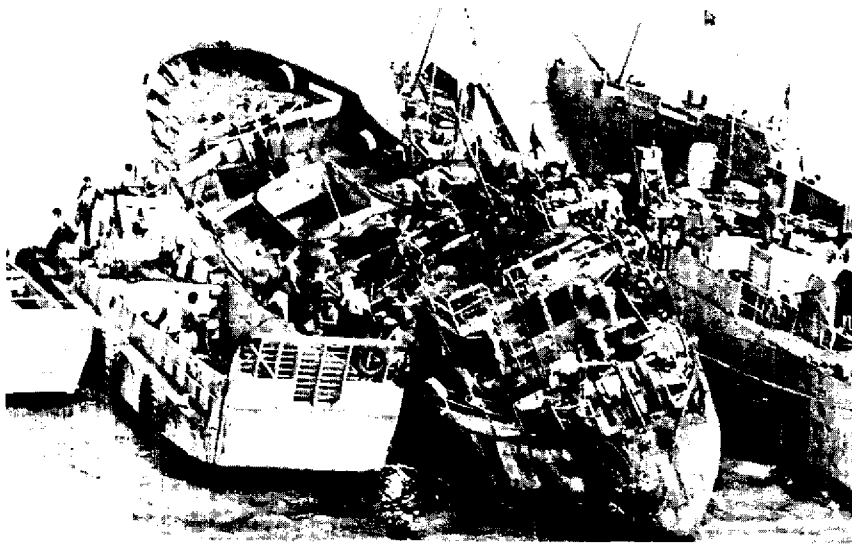
The organized non-Communist opposition having been virtually eliminated, most nationalists joined the Viet Minh resistance against the French. Initially the resistance used weapons left over from World War II, but after the fall of mainland China to the Communists in 1949, the Viet Minh was able to obtain significant amounts of war materiel from Communist China and the U.S.S.R.

The war in Viet-Nam reached an eventual stalemate, with the French controlling the major population centers and a few isolated outposts in the hinterlands, while the Viet Minh occupied most of the countryside in the North as well as many rural areas in the South. The most significant battle of the war occurred at a small French-held position in the far northwest called Dien Bien Phu. On May 7, 1954, Viet Minh forces overran this outpost, inflicting heavy casualties on the French defenders. This was the turning-point for the French people, and pressure to end the Indochina war increased.

#### The Geneva Conference of 1954

The Geneva conference to set the peace terms opened on May 8, 1954. The U.S.S.R. and the U.K. served as cochairmen. Seven other delegations participated: France, the United States, Communist China, Cambodia, Laos, the Viet Minh, and the State of Viet-Nam (the non-Communist government at Saigon, led by Bao Dai and supported by the U.S. and its allies).

The July 1954 Geneva Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet-Nam called for a cease-fire; provisional partition of Viet-Nam at the 17th parallel, with regroupment of the Communist forces and their sympathizers to the north and regroupment of French and non-



During the past two decades Hanoi has obtained large amounts of war materiel from Communist China. Here South Vietnamese and U.S. salvage crews board steel-hulled trawler run aground south of Saigon in 1966 while attempting to infiltrate guns and supplies to the Viet Cong. Some 250 tons of weapons and ammunition, many with Chinese markings, were recovered.

Communist forces to the south; a demilitarized zone 3 miles wide on either side of the 17th parallel; and a prohibition against foreign military bases in Viet-Nam, importation of war materiel, and inclusion of either zone of Viet-Nam in military pacts. Each zone was forbidden to interfere in the internal affairs of the other. Separate agreements covered Laos and Cambodia. An International Control Commission (ICC), composed of representatives of Canada, India, and Poland, was established in each country to oversee implementation of the agreements.

The Geneva conference issued its final declaration on July 21. The declaration, which bore no signatures, reaffirmed the principles of the agreements and called for the establishment of "democratic institutions" in Viet-Nam through "free general elections." General elections were to be held in July 1956. In the interim, neither side was to take reprisal against partisans of the other. People in one zone who wished to settle in the other zone were to be allowed to do so.

The U.S. representative did not fully endorse the Geneva agreements, but President Eisenhower pledged that the United States would not use force or the threat of force to disturb the arrangements. The State of Viet-Nam objected to partition of Viet-Nam and stated its unwillingness to be bound by any agreement among the other parties concerning the political future of its people.

From the Geneva conference the Vietnamese Communists gained unchallenged control over nearly half the country and a majority of the population. Thus they were certain to win any countrywide elections, giving them a good chance to control all Viet-Nam. Control could have come about sooner if the fledgling government in the South had fallen before the elections.

The Saigon government under Ngo Dinh Diem, however, was able to disarm the private factional armies in the South and unify the non-Communist majority. Standing on the position stated by the State of Viet-Nam's representative at Geneva, Diem refused to discuss elections with the Hanoi government on the ground that truly free and democratic elections in the North would be impossible under the Communist regime.

#### The Postwar Exodus

Article 14 of the Geneva Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet-Nam provided for a period of 300 days during which freedom of movement would be allowed all persons wishing to move from one zone of Viet-Nam to the other. By early 1955 nearly 900,000 North Vietnamese had sought refuge in South Viet-Nam, despite a combination of administrative regulations and extra-legal control techniques by the Communists to end the migration. For example, to leave one's village, a special pass

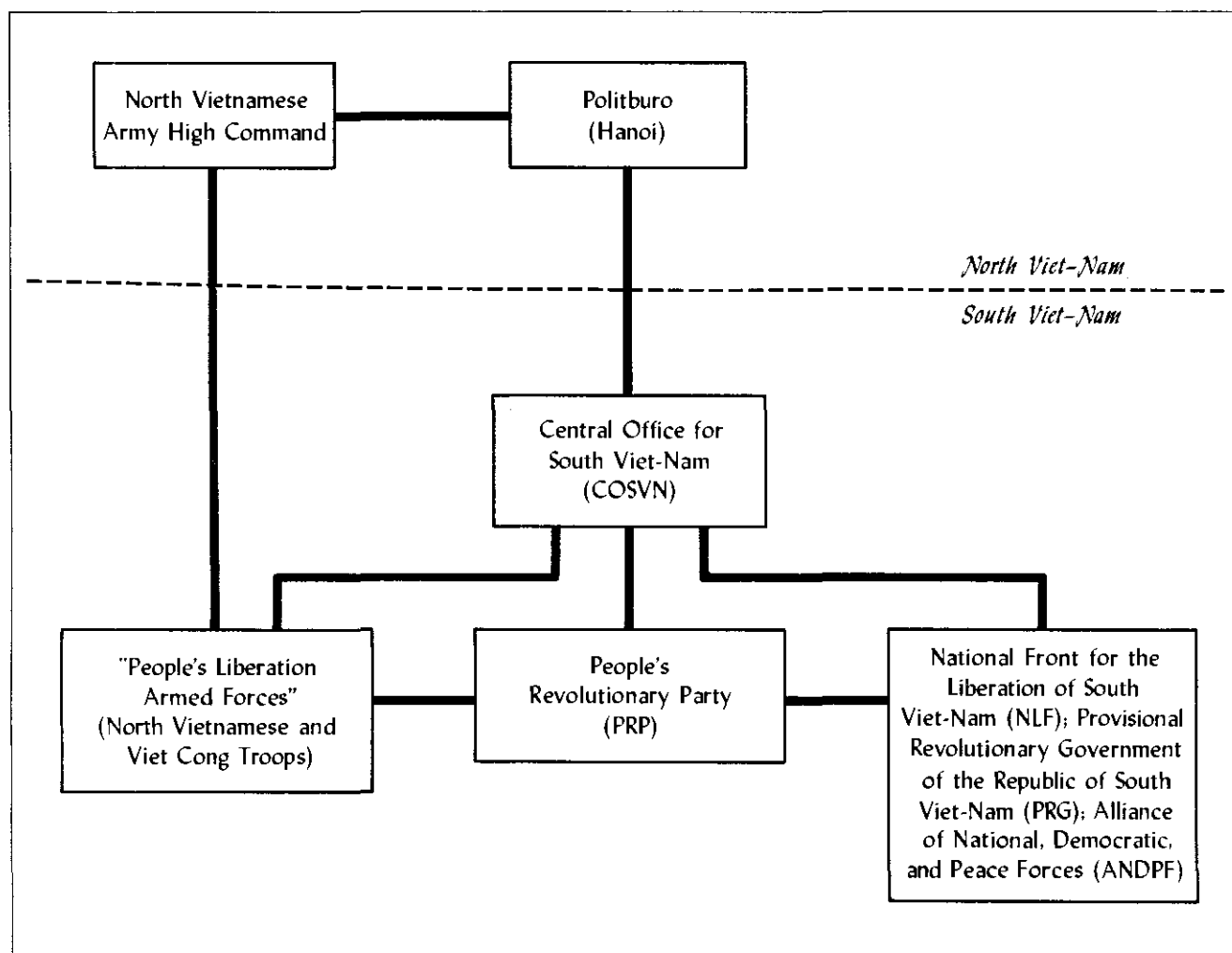


October 1954--refugees at North Viet-Nam's port of Haiphong prepare to embark to South Viet-Nam during free-movement period set by Geneva agreements. Turbaned men, foreground, are North African members of French Army.

was required. Police checkpoints along the roads ensured that only authorized travel took place. There was only one train per day from Hanoi to the Haiphong evacuation point (for sea travel to the South), and husbands and wives were not permitted to travel together. The International Control Commission compound in Hanoi was guarded by Communist troops who blocked entry to anyone who wished to air a complaint or request help. Villagers were forbidden to speak with ICC field representatives, and all of the representatives' queries were referred to party cadres who had been primed to give "correct" answers.

#### "Reform" Measures

As in most Communist countries, "Agricultural Reform" in North Viet-Nam was designed to deal more with political problems facing the regime than with economic and social inequities. The Vietnamese Communists began preparing for land reform in 1951, with an agriculture tax designed to tax landowners out of existence; when this failed to break Vietnamese landholding traditions, the Communists launched a "Political Struggle" under the motto "give the masses a free hand to fight the reactionaries." This reign of terror spared no class or group; even party members fell victim to it. According to Hoang Van Chi (see Reading List), "The death-roll during the days of terror averaged between three to five in every village...." An immediate result of the Political Struggle was greatly increased willingness to "volunteer" for "citizen labor" and to pay taxes promptly. Also, a substantial part of the population was implicated in the executions, thereby removing the sole onus from the party and government. The main effect, however, was to condition the rural population for the next step, the "Land Reform."



## BASIC COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION IN SOUTH VIET-NAM

The Land Reform was carried out in two stages, the first being the Land Rent Reduction Campaign (1954) and the second the Land Reform proper (1955-56) during which land was distributed to "the toilers." Distribution, however, was but a transitory step leading to "cooperativization" and finally "collectivization." In implementing the Land Reform, the party followed the methods of the Chinese Communists. Its "free hand to the masses" doctrine meant that persons were accused, denounced, and punished with little concern on the part of the leadership about excesses.

Statistics on victims of the reform program (1951-56) were never publicized, but the figure probably lies between 100,000 and 200,000, including the considerable number who committed suicide to avoid mass trials or who starved to death. When the Geneva agreements went into effect in 1954, many potential victims sought to escape these measures by going South. This caused Hanoi to ease the campaign until the 300-day period for free movement expired.

The purge of the countryside was resumed in late 1955 and reached a peak in early 1956. By late summer, however, the de-Stalinization campaign in Russia and the famous "Hundred Flowers" speech in China had had a liberalizing influence in North Viet-Nam. Moreover, the essentially political goals of the land reform campaign (i.e., the elimination of political opposition to the regime by equating "landlords" with "reactionaries" in rural areas) had been largely achieved. A "Rectification of Errors" campaign was begun in the fall of 1956, therefore, to halt the excesses.

As in Hungary and Poland, the period of liberalization resulted in open revolt in North Viet-Nam, principally in the Quynh Luu district of Ho Chi Minh's native province, Nghe An. A thousand peasants were reported killed or wounded and several thousand more arrested and deported when the uprising was suppressed by the "Viet-Nam People's Army." By early 1957 the short-lived period of liberalization was over.

## The Purge of Intellectuals

The relative harmony between intellectuals and the Viet Minh regime began to break down shortly after Mao Tse-tung took over leadership of China in 1949. This new Communist power provided the Viet Minh with increased supplies of military materiel as well as ideological support, including treatises on the control of intellectuals. When the Viet Minh began to apply some of these Chinese precepts, many intellectuals returned to French-controlled areas.

The "Land Reform" campaign affected intellectuals unfavorably since most of them were sons and daughters of landowners. They could escape serious punishment, however, by earning the status of "Progressive Personalities." This class consisted of "individuals of the landlord class who participated positively in the resistance war against the imperialist interventionists, against the traitorous Vietnamese puppets, and who have enthusiastically supported the popular democratic authorities . . . ." "Progressive Personalities" were obliged to "voluntarily present all the land they possessed to the people." They were also required to undergo "reeducation" in order to rid themselves of "feudalistic tendencies." Reeducation courses produced "confessions" by the most prominent men and women in North Vietnamese letters, repudiating their previous artistic endeavors as "inspirations of Vietnamese traitors" and "products of a decadent culture."

In the wake of a general liberalization trend in Communist countries, North Vietnamese party leaders in September 1956 stated that "a number of grave errors had been committed during the execution of the land reforms" and that the party would correct these errors by, among other things, "extending democracy, safeguarding democratic liberties,

and enlarging the system of democratic legality." The regime further announced that it would give "different tendencies the freedom to discuss and argue."

This freedom lasted only 3 months, but the momentum built up during the movement resulted in public demonstrations and the large-scale peasant revolt described above. Tightened controls ended the period of liberalization, but repercussions continued. A Politburo resolution of January 6, 1958, charged that the "liberals" were saboteurs: "It is clear that the anti-socialist and anti-Party elements have profited from our laxness to continue their attacks on us in the sphere of ideas and under the guise of arts and letters. The activities of these saboteurs among the artists and writers constitute a most dangerous threat and must be dealt with urgently." For most intellectuals, this meant another round of political reeducation and self-criticism.

## Hanoi, COSVN, and the NLF

By 1959 Hanoi turned to open warfare when it realized it would not be able to subdue the South with the relatively low-level military and subversive tactics it had used since 1954. The Third Party Congress held in Hanoi in September 1960 called for the formation of a "broad national united front" in South Vietnam. In December 1960 Hanoi radio announced the formation of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NLF)—a "coalition of all patriotic forces opposed to the reactionary and traitorous Diem clique." In October 1961 Hanoi reactivated its central Office for South Viet-Nam (COSVN), the clandestine headquarters of the party in the South.

Hanoi directs most of its military, political, and propaganda efforts in South Viet-Nam through COSVN. (Communist military units in the northern half of South Viet-Nam are controlled directly by Hanoi.) Shortly after COSVN was reactivated the party surfaced in the South as the People's Revolutionary Party. The PRP is simply the southern branch of the Lao Dong Party, but Hanoi uses the name People's Revolutionary Party rather than Lao Dong to reinforce the impression that the "revolution" in South Viet-Nam is strictly indigenous.

Publicly, the PRP "Central Committee" is the leading party organ in the South, but the covert COSVN is actually the highest authority. Captured documents reveal that COSVN and the PRP Central Committee essentially are staffed by the same people. Moreover, the members of the Standing (or Current Affairs) Committee which runs COSVN are also members of the Lao Dong Central Committee based in Hanoi.

Overall leadership for the war in the South is provided by the Politburo of the Lao Dong Central Committee in Hanoi. The Lao Dong Politburo not only gives broad policy direction to COSVN, but also sends COSVN specific directives on important issues.



Viet Cong plan attack.



*In typical guerrilla-warfare tactic, Viet Cong employ villagers to sharpen bamboo stakes for trail traps in South Viet-Nam.*

COSVN does, however, have wide powers in running day-to-day operations in the South. This is possible, within the party's principle of the higher echelon always directing the lower, because in recent years COSVN has been strengthened with executive cadres (Lao Dong Central Committee members) from the North. Evidence indicates that Pham Hung, fourth-ranking member of the Lao Dong Politburo and First Vice Premier in the Hanoi government, is the present chief of COSVN.

The Politburo also directs the foreign activities of front groups in the South. It appoints the members of various "friendship" delegations as well as the staffs of permanent missions abroad. At least four of the five principal NLF (Viet Cong) negotiators at the Paris talks on Viet-Nam are members of the Lao Dong Party. The Politburo controls the substantive positions taken by the NLF delegation (now called the "Provisional Revolutionary Government" delegation) at the talks.

In addition to mobilizing the population, the National Liberation Front has become Hanoi's public spokesman in South Viet-Nam. After the 1968 Tet offensive the NLF began to portray itself as a "governmental" entity, claiming that it controlled and administered vast segments of South Viet-Nam. It used its presence at the Paris talks to back its claim as the "sovereign agent of the South Vietnamese people" in foreign affairs. The transition from front to government was completed on June 10, 1969, when the NLF joined forces with another Communist front (the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces, ANDPF, established in 1968) to form the "Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet-Nam" (the PRG). In a radio broadcast the next day, the NLF stated it had "transferred" its "authority" in domestic and

foreign affairs to the PRG. According to the broadcast, the NLF would retain its role as the "leader of the liberation struggle."

Exactly how the PRG will fit into the Communist superstructure is not yet known. Evidence suggests that the PRG, like the NLF, will function mainly as public cover for activities conceived by Hanoi and executed through the various functional committees of COSVN (e.g., Military Affairs Committee, Front Committee, Finance and Economy Section, Propaganda and Training Section, etc.).

#### Intensification of the War

In 1964 Hanoi shifted from infiltrating small units to sending entire regular regiments into South Viet-Nam. This infiltration, across the demilitarized zone (DMZ) and via the "Ho Chi Minh Trail" complex in Laos, continues to the present; it is estimated that nearly 600,000 soldiers and political cadre have been infiltrated into the South thus far.

In August 1964, in retaliation for North Vietnamese attacks on two U.S. destroyers on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin, the United States bombed selected naval facilities in North Viet-Nam. In February 1965, facing the invasion of the South by North Vietnamese divisions, President Johnson ordered the bombing of supply routes and other military targets in North Viet-Nam and an extensive buildup in U.S. forces.

To promote negotiations leading to settlement of the war, President Johnson on March 31, 1968, ordered a halt in U.S. bombing above the 19th parallel, thus in effect exempting most of North Viet-Nam from attack. U.S. and North Vietnamese negotiators met at Paris May 15 to discuss terms for a complete bombing halt

and to arrange for a conference of all "interested parties" in the Viet-Nam war, including the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam and the National Liberation Front. President Johnson ordered all bombing stopped effective November 1, 1968, and the four delegations met for their first plenary session on January 17, 1969.

#### The Paris Meetings

The only official U.S. contact with representatives of North Viet-Nam is at the Paris meetings. Hanoi and its southern agents (the Viet Cong) have from the outset demanded that the United States and its allies withdraw their forces from South Viet-Nam unconditionally, and that the United States "get rid of" the elected, legal government of South Viet-Nam. The Saigon government and the United States have proposed mutual withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese forces and free elections—in which all parties, including Communist, can participate—under international supervision to determine South Viet-Nam's political future. To date, all U.S. efforts to get serious negotiations underway at Paris have failed.

#### ECONOMY

Although only about 15 percent of its land area is arable, 75 percent of North Viet-Nam's labor force is employed in agriculture; industry employs less than 10 percent. The gross national product is about \$1.6 billion; GNP per capita is about \$90.

Industrial development proceeded at a fairly rapid pace until 1964; then it slowed down considerably, due largely to Hanoi's commitment of manpower and materiel to the war in the South. The U.S. bombing campaign also contributed substantially to the halt in economic development by forcing the regime to devote

human and material resources to air defense and repair of bomb-damaged defense installations, communications facilities, and supply networks. Economic reconstruction has proceeded slowly since the bombing halt.

Food processing is North Viet-Nam's most important industry in terms of value of output. Rice, sugar, fish, and tea are the principal processed foods. Most North Vietnamese industry is in an embryonic stage of development. However, there is a large textile plant at Nam Dinh and a steel complex at Thai Nguyen, both of which were severely bombed.

North Viet-Nam's principal mineral resources, in order of importance, are coal, iron, apatite, and chromite. The major industrial crop is timber.

Agriculture is concentrated in the heavily populated Red River delta, where an elaborate system of dikes, dams, and reservoirs allows extensive irrigation during dry periods and prevents devastating floods during the rainy season. Much of the land is double-cropped. Rice is the principal crop; corn, sweet potatoes, and manioc are also grown. Despite government efforts to promote "technological revolution," North Vietnamese agriculture is largely unmechanized. Draft power is still provided by oxen and water buffalo, and irrigation is accomplished mainly with manual pumps.

North Viet-Nam has historically been a rice-deficit area. During the French colonial period the rice-rich Mekong delta in the South made up much of the food shortage in the North, but with the partition of Viet-Nam in 1954 rice inputs from this source stopped. The Hanoi government has made strong but thus far unsuccessful efforts to attain self-sufficiency in food grain production.

In recent years, because of inherent inefficiencies, bad weather, natural disasters, and increased attention on the part of the administration to the war in the South, rice shortages



Combining traditional Tet (Lunar New Year) observance with anti-American propaganda, this poster—on display in Haiphong, North Viet-Nam's second largest city—shows rooster attacking soldier labeled "US". 1969 was the Year of the Rooster, according to traditional Vietnamese/Chinese calendar.

have reached critical proportions. At one point in 1968 the monthly "rice ration" of an average North Vietnamese was composed of only 30 percent rice, the remainder being wheat products, corn, and manioc. North Viet-Nam was forced to rely on massive imports of wheat and other food grains from the Soviet Union and China in order to maintain even bare subsistence levels.

Most of the farmers are organized into "voluntary" cooperatives whose affairs are managed by local party chapters. The Government claims that more than 90 percent of all farmers and 95 percent of the arable land belong to cooperatives. The planning function is monopolized by the central government.

North Viet-Nam has never enjoyed a foreign trade surplus. Deficits have been financed through aid from Communist countries, with whom North Viet-Nam conducts nearly all its trade. Recently, North Viet-Nam has been trying to expand its trade contacts with Western nations, especially the Scandinavian countries, and Japan. Its principal exports are coal, wood products, apatite, and handicrafts; its imports run the gamut from petroleum products, vehicles, and industrial equipment to food and raw textiles. The Government has not published trade statistics since 1963.

#### FOREIGN RELATIONS

North Viet-Nam maintains diplomatic relations with all Communist states in Europe and Asia; with a number of "third-world" nations in Asia, Africa, and the Near East; and is expanding its diplomatic contacts with non-Communist nations in Western Europe. In January 1969 Sweden recognized North Viet-Nam, and later that year Hanoi sent an economic delegation to the Scandinavian countries to discuss its postwar development.

In recent years the North Vietnamese have remained neutral in the Sino-Soviet schism. Hanoi relies on good relations with both the U.S.S.R. and Communist China to ensure itself adequate and timely supplies of war materiel and economic assistance.

North Viet-Nam's relations with Laos and Cambodia have become increasingly strained because of Hanoi's militant support of Communist insurgents, especially in Laos. Hanoi has never admitted the presence of the more than 50,000 North Vietnamese troops in Laos, but these troops bear the brunt of the fighting on the Communist side. North Viet-Nam also shuffles large contingents of troops in and out of Cambodia between Communist offensives in South Viet-Nam. Cambodian media have re-

cently complained that Hanoi is supporting the Khmer Rouge (Communist) insurgency which is aimed at toppling the government of Prince Sihanouk.

#### NORTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

\* member of Lao Dong Party Central Committee

\*\* member of Politburo

President—Ton Duc Thang\*

Vice President—Nguyen Luong Bang\*

Chairman, National Assembly Standing Committee—Truong Chinh\*\*

Premier—Pham Van Dong\*\*

First Deputy Premier—Pham Hung\*\*

Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense—Vo Nguyen Giap\*\*

Deputy Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs—Nguyen Duy Trinh\*\*

#### POLITBURO OF THE LAO DONG PARTY

(listed in rank order used by Hanoi media)

Le Duan (First Secretary of the Party)

Truong Chinh

Pham Van Dong

Pham Hung

Vo Nguyen Giap

Le Duc Tho

Nguyen Duy Trinh

Le Thanh Nghi

Hoang Van Hoan

(Alternate members: Tran Quoc Hoan and Van Tien Dung)

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TEXT OF FINAL DECLARATION  
(Geneva Accords 1954)

(Unofficial translation)

Final declaration, dated July 21, 1954, of the Geneva Conference on the problem of restoring peace in Indochina, in which the representatives of Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, France, Laos, the People's Republic of China, the State of Viet-Nam, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America took part.

1. The Conference takes note of the agreements ending hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam and organizing international control and the supervision of the execution of the provisions of these agreements.

2. The Conference expresses satisfaction at the ending of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam. The Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreements on the cessation of hostilities will permit Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam henceforth to play their part in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations.

3. The Conference takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia and of Laos of their intention to adopt measures permitting all citizens to take their place in the national community, in particular by participating in the next general elections, which, in conformity with the constitution of each of these countries, shall take place in the course of the year 1955, by secret ballot and in conditions of respect for fundamental freedoms.

4. The Conference takes note of the clauses in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam prohibiting the introduction into Viet-Nam of foreign troops and military personnel as well as of all kinds of arms and munitions. The Conference also takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia and Laos of their resolution not to request foreign aid, whether in war material, in personnel, or in instructors except for the purpose of effective defense of their territory and, in the case of Laos, to the extent defined by the agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Laos.

5. The Conference takes note of the clauses in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam to the effect that no military base at the disposition of a foreign state may be established in the regrouping zones of the two parties, the latter having the obligation to see that the zones allotted to them shall not constitute part of any military alliance and shall not be utilized for the resumption of hostilities or in the service of an aggressive policy. The Conference also takes note of the declarations of the Governments of Cambodia and Laos to the effect that they will not join in any agreement with other states if this agreement includes the obligation to participate in a military alliance not in conformity with the principles of the charter of the United Nations or, in the case of Laos, with the principles of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Laos or, so long as their security is not threatened, the obligation to establish bases on Cambodian or Laotian territory for the military forces of foreign powers.



6. The Conference recognizes that the essential purpose of the agreement relating to Viet-Nam is to settle military questions with a view to ending hostilities and that the military demarcation line should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary. The Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities creates the necessary basis for the achievement in the near future of a political settlement in Viet-Nam.

7. The Conference declares that, so far as Viet-Nam is concerned, the settlement of political problems, effected on the basis of respect for the principles of independence, unity, and territorial integrity shall permit the Vietnamese people to enjoy the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by democratic institutions established as a result of free general elections by secret ballot.

In order to insure that sufficient progress in the restoration of peace has been made, and that all the necessary conditions obtain for free expression of the national will, general elections shall be held in July 1956 under the supervision of the international commission composed of representatives of the member states of the international Supervisory Commission referred to in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities. Consultations will be held on this subject between the competent representative authorities of the two zones from April 20, 1955, onwards.

8. The provisions of the agreements on the cessation of hostilities intended to insure the protection of individuals and of property must be most strictly applied and must, in particular, allow every one in Viet-Nam to decide freely in which zone he wishes to live.

9. The competent representative authorities of the northern and southern zones of Viet-Nam, as well as the authorities of Laos and Cambodia, must not permit any individual or collective reprisals against persons who have collaborated in any way with one of the parties during the war or against members of such persons' families.

10. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the French Government to the effect that it is ready to withdraw its troops from the territory of Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam, at the request of the governments concerned and within a period which shall be fixed by agreement between the parties except in the cases where, by agreement between the two parties, a certain number of French troops shall remain at specified points and for a specified time.

11. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the French Government to the effect that for the settlement of all the problems connected with the reestablishment and consolidation of peace in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam, the French Government will proceed from the principle of respect for the independence and sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam.

12. In their relations with Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam, each member of the Geneva Conference undertakes to respect the sovereignty, the independence, the unity, and the territorial integrity of the above-mentioned states, and to refrain from any interference in their internal affairs.

13. The members of the Conference agree to consult one another on any question which may be referred to them by the International Supervisory Commission, in order to study such measures as may prove necessary to insure that the agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam are respected.

# VIET-NAM

## INFORMATION NOTES

OFFICE OF MEDIA SERVICES, BUREAU OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
NUMBER 10, AUGUST 1967



## LEGAL BASIS FOR U.S. MILITARY AID TO SOUTH VIET-NAM

The U.S. military commitment in Viet-Nam is based on a solid foundation of international law, including the following well-established points of law and fact:

- The people of South Viet-Nam have the inherent right of individual and collective self-defense against armed attack, which includes the right to seek aid from other friendly states.

- The United States has the right to participate in the collective defense of South Viet-Nam at the request of its government.

- South Viet-Nam is the victim of an armed attack instigated, directed, and sustained by North Viet-Nam in violation of international law and in violation of the Geneva accords.

- The United States is obligated, under the SEATO treaty, to respond to a Communist armed attack against South Viet-Nam.

- With Vietnamese, U.S., and other allied troops fighting in South Viet-Nam against troops infiltrated from, and supplied from, North Viet-Nam, U.S. airstrikes against military targets in North Viet-Nam are an appropriate exercise of the right of self-defense.

- Actions by the United States and South Viet-Nam are justified under the Geneva accords of 1954.

- The President of the United States has the authority to commit U.S. forces in the collective defense of South Viet-Nam.

### I. The United States and South Viet-Nam are exercising the inherent right of individual and collective self-defense.

A. The United States is acting at the request of the Government of South Viet-Nam, which is the victim of an armed attack.

B. Every country has the right to take measures of self-defense against armed attack and to have the assistance of others in that defense.

*For a more detailed treatment of this subject, see THE LEGALITY OF U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE DEFENSE OF VIET-NAM, State Department publication 8062. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, 15¢.*

C. The right of self-defense against armed attack is an inherent right and is recognized as such in article 51 of the U.N. Charter which provides that "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense . . ."

### II. South Viet-Nam is the victim of an armed attack instigated, directed, and sustained by North Viet-Nam in violation of international law and in violation of the 1954 Geneva accords.

A. The Geneva accords of 1954 established a demarcation line between North Viet-Nam and South Viet-Nam. They provided for withdrawal of military forces into the respective zones north and south of this line. The accords prohibited the use of either zone for the resumption of hostilities or to "further an aggressive policy."

B. North Viet-Nam violated the accords from the outset by ordering thousands of armed cadre to remain in South Viet-Nam to form a clandestine political-military organization. The activities of this covert organization were directed toward the kidnapping and assassination of civilian officials.

In 1959 Hanoi decided to open a large-scale military campaign against South Viet-Nam. Since that decision North Viet-Nam has infiltrated more than 100,000 fighting men and many tons of war material into South Viet-Nam. Beginning in the fall of 1964 whole units of the regular army of North Viet-Nam have been sent across the demarcation line to enlarge the attack on South Viet-Nam.

C. As early as June 1962 the Legal Committee of the International Control Commission (ICC) determined that North Viet-Nam was carrying out "armed attacks" against South Viet-Nam in violation of the Geneva accords. The Legal Committee's report made the following points:

- Article 10 of the Geneva agreement called for "the complete cessation of all hostilities in Viet-Nam."

•Article 19 required both sides to insure their zones "are not used for the resumption of hostilities or to further aggressive policy."

•Article 24 required each side to respect the territory of the other and "to commit no act and undertake no operation against the other Party."

•Article 27 specified that the agreement applied to all elements of the military command. This included regular, irregular, and guerrilla forces.

The report then made the following finding:

"Having examined the complaints and the supporting material sent by the South Vietnamese Mission, the Committee has come to the conclusion that in specific instances there is evidence to show that armed and unarmed personnel, arms, munitions and other supplies have been sent from the Zone in the North to the Zone in the South with the object of supporting, organizing and carrying out hostile activities, including armed attacks, directed against the Armed Forces and Administration of the Zone in the South. These acts are in violation of Articles 10, 19, 24, and 27 of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet-Nam."

D. The right of individual and collective self-defense applies whether or not South Viet-Nam is regarded as an independent sovereign state. The Republic of Viet-Nam in the South has been recognized as a separate international entity by approximately 60 governments. The Geneva accords of 1954 provided for a temporary division of Viet-Nam into two zones at the 17th parallel. The action of the United Nations in the Korean conflict of 1950 clearly established the principle that there is no greater license for one zone of a temporarily divided state to attack the other zone than there is for one state to attack another state.

### III. The United States is obligated by the SEATO treaty to respond to an armed attack against South Viet-Nam.

A. Article IV (1) of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty provides that "Each Party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the Treaty area against any of the Parties or against any state or territory which the Parties by unanimous agreement may hereafter designate, would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes."

B. By protocol to the treaty the parties unanimously extended the protection of the treaty to "the states of Cambodia and Laos and the free territory under the jurisdiction of the state of Viet-Nam."

C. The obligation of each party under article IV (1) is individual as well as collective. "Each Party" recognizes that aggression by armed attack would endanger "its own peace and safety" and agrees that it will act to meet the common danger.

### IV. U.S. airstrikes against North Viet-Nam are an appropriate exercise of the right of self-defense.

A. U.S. airstrikes are aimed at carefully selected military targets—not at civilian population centers. Every effort is made to keep civilian casualties at a minimum.

B. Airstrikes against lines of communication and other military targets in North Viet-Nam are necessary to impede the infiltration of men and supplies into South Viet-Nam and do not represent a disproportionate response to the force being used against South Viet-Nam by North Viet-Nam.

C. There is no rule of international law that permits an aggressor to strike at a neighbor with immunity from retaliation against its own territory.

### V. Actions by the United States and South Viet-Nam are justified under the Geneva accords of 1954.

A. Description of the accords. The Geneva accords of 1954 established the date and hour for a cease-fire in Viet-Nam, drew a "provisional military demarcation line" with a demilitarized zone on both sides, and required an exchange of prisoners and the phased regroupment of Viet Minh forces from the South to the North and of French Union forces from the North to the South. The introduction into Viet-Nam of troop reinforcements and new military equipment (except for replacement and repair) was prohibited. The armed forces of each party were required to respect the demilitarized zone and the territory of the other zone. The adherence of either zone to any military alliance, and the use of either zone for the resumption of hostilities or to "further an aggressive policy," were prohibited. The International Control Commission was established, composed of India, Canada, and Poland, with India as chairman. The task of the Commission was to supervise the proper execution of the provisions of the cease-fire agreement. The people of Viet-Nam were to enjoy "the fundamental freedoms, guaranteed by democratic institutions established as a result of free general elections by secret ballot." In this climate, general elections for reunification were to be held in July 1956 under the supervision of the ICC.

B. North Viet-Nam violated the accords from the beginning. From the very beginning, the North Vietnamese violated the 1954 Geneva accords. Communist military forces and supplies were left in the South in violation of the accords. Other Communist guerrillas were moved north for further training and then were infiltrated into the South in violation of the accords. North Viet-Nam greatly enlarged its armed forces with Chinese Communist help while South Viet-Nam reduced its own.

C. The introduction of U.S. military personnel and equipment was justified. The accords prohibited the reinforcement of foreign

military forces in Viet-Nam and the introduction of new military equipment, but they allowed replacement of existing military personnel and equipment. Prior to late 1961 South Viet-Nam had received considerable military equipment and supplies from the United States (an estimated \$200 million in material had been withdrawn by the French), and the United States had established a gradually enlarged Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) of fewer than 900 men, to replace the French training and advisory personnel. These actions were reported to the ICC and were permissible under the agreements.

As the Communist aggression intensified between 1959 and 1961, with increased infiltration and a marked stepping-up of Communist terrorism in the South, the United States found it necessary in late 1961 to increase substantially the numbers of our military personnel and the amounts and types of equipment introduced by this country into South Viet-Nam. These increases were justified by the principle of international law that a material breach of agreement by one party entitles the other at least to withhold compliance with an equivalent, corresponding, or related provision until the defaulting party is prepared to honor its obligations.

In accordance with this principle, the systematic violation of the Geneva accords by North Viet-Nam justified South Viet-Nam in suspending compliance with the provision controlling entry of foreign military personnel and military equipment.

D. South Viet-Nam was justified in refusing to implement the election provisions of the Geneva accords.

The 1954 Geneva accords contemplated the reunification of the country by general elections in July 1956, which were intended to obtain the "free expression of the national will."

Throughout the 1954 Geneva conference the United States adhered to its well-established position, expressed by Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith as follows:

"In the case of nations now divided against their will, we shall continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections supervised by the United Nations to insure that they are conducted fairly."

Throughout the conference both the United States and the State of Viet-Nam (South) rejected the effort to bind the people of South Viet-Nam to any election which would not permit that "free expression of the national will."

E. South Viet-Nam did not agree to the election provision of the accords because it failed to provide for supervision by the United Nations, but South Viet-Nam did not reject the concept of free elections. President Diem refused to participate in elections in 1956 because the conditions of repression prevailing in North Viet-Nam at that time made free elections impossible.

F. The Viet Minh was a popular movement during the war with France, but after the cease-fire there was considerable resistance to the Communist program in North Viet-Nam. Nine hundred thousand refugees fled to South Viet-Nam, and all opposition that remained was harshly repressed. General Giap, currently Minister of Defense of North Viet-Nam, in addressing the Tenth Congress of the North Vietnamese Communist Party in October 1956 publicly acknowledged that executions, terror, and torture had become commonplace.

A nationwide election in these circumstances would have been meaningless. Few people in the North would have dared to vote against the Communist regime. With a substantial majority of the Vietnamese people living north of the 17th parallel, such an election would have meant turning the country over to the Communists without regard to the will of the people.

G. The election issue can furnish no justification for North Viet-Nam's armed aggression against South Viet-Nam. International law requires that political disputes be settled by peaceful means. Recourse to armed force is prohibited. This doctrine is of great importance in the temporarily divided states, be it Germany, Korea, or Viet-Nam, where peace depends upon respect for established demarcation lines. The action of the United Nations in the Korean conflict of 1950 clearly established the principle that there is no greater license for one zone of a temporarily divided state to attack the other zone than there is for one state to attack another state. South Viet-Nam has the same right that South Korea had to defend itself and to organize collective defense against an armed attack from the North. A resolution of the Security Council dated June 25, 1950, noted "with grave concern the armed attack upon the Republic of Korea by forces from North Korea" and determined "that this action constitutes a breach of the peace."

VI. The President has full authority to commit U.S. forces in the collective defense of South Viet-Nam.

The United States is acting in Viet-Nam with the full authority of the executive and the legislative branches of the Government.

A. The President's power under article II of the U.S. Constitution extends to the actions currently undertaken in Viet-Nam. Under the Constitution, the President is Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy. He holds the prime responsibility for the conduct of U.S. foreign relations. These duties carry very broad powers, including the power to deploy American forces abroad and commit them to military operations when the President deems such action necessary to maintain the security and defense of the United States.

Since the Constitution was adopted there have been at least 125 instances in which the President has ordered the Armed Forces to take action or maintain positions abroad without

obtaining prior congressional authorization. For example, President Truman ordered 250,000 troops to Korea during the Korean war and President Eisenhower dispatched 14,000 troops to Lebanon in 1958.

The Constitution leaves it to the President to determine whether the circumstances of a particular armed attack are urgent and the potential consequences so threatening to the security of the United States that he should act without formally consulting the Congress.

B. The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty authorizes the President's actions. Under article VI of the U.S. Constitution, "all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land." Article IV, paragraph 1, of the SEATO treaty establishes as a matter of law that a Communist armed attack against South Viet-Nam endangers the peace and safety of the United States. In this event the United States undertakes to "act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes."

C. The Joint Resolution of Congress of August 10, 1964, authorizes U.S. participation in the collective defense of South Viet-Nam.

Congress has acted in unmistakable fashion to approve and authorize U.S. actions in Viet-Nam. Following the North Vietnamese attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin against United States destroyers, Congress adopted, by a Senate vote of 88-2 and a House vote of 416-0, a joint resolution containing a series of important declarations and provisions of law.

Section 1 resolved that "the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression."

Section 2 provides that the United States is prepared to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom. The identification of South Viet-Nam through the reference to "protocol state" in this section is unmistakable, and the grant of authority "as the

President determines" is unequivocal.

The following illuminating exchange occurred during the hearings:

"Mr. Cooper. [John Sherman Cooper] .... Does the Senator consider that in enacting this resolution we are satisfying that requirement of article IV of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty? In other words, are we now giving the President advance authority to take whatever action he may deem necessary respecting South Vietnam and its defense, or with respect to the defense of any other country included in the treaty?"

"Mr. Fulbright. [J. William Fulbright] I think that is correct.

"Mr. Cooper. Then looking ahead, if the President decided that it was necessary to use such force as could lead into war, we will give that authority by this resolution?"

"Mr. Fulbright. That is the way I would interpret it. If a situation later developed in which we thought the approval should be withdrawn it could be withdrawn by concurrent resolution."

The August 1964 joint resolution continues in force today. Section 2 of the resolution provides that it shall expire "when the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, except that it may be terminated earlier by concurrent resolution of the Congress."

D. No declaration of war by the Congress is required to authorize U.S. participation in the collective defense of South Viet-Nam.

Over a very long period in our history, practice and precedent have confirmed the constitutional authority to engage U.S. forces in hostilities without a declaration of war. This history extends from the undeclared war with France in 1798 and the war against the Barbary pirates at the end of the 18th century to the Korean war of 1950-53.

In the case of Viet-Nam the Congress has supported the determination of the President by the Senate's approval of the SEATO treaty, the adoption of the joint resolution of August 10, 1964, and the enactment of the necessary authorizations and appropriations.

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## THE CULT OF THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT IN THE VIETNAMESE VILLAGE



By VU-TRONG-TIEN

In the minds of its people, the Vietnamese countryside is inhabited by supernatural spirits. Some hide amidst thickets while others take refuge at the feet of fig or banyan trees. Still others establish themselves upon small mounds of earth which dominate the routes leading to and from the village. All the secrecy surrounding the dwelling places of the spirits is merely a pretense in order to instill further veneration for them on the part of the villagers.

The manner whereby these spirits are honored is as simple as the spirits themselves. Sometimes, a pot of lime is either hung upon a branch or placed at the foot of a tree. At other times, a rustle urn of incense is put on an elevated spot of ground.

In this nebulous and supernatural world which has been superimposed upon the pastoral landscape, the village or guardian spirit stands out from all the other spirits in the same way that the community house, the Dinh, stands out from the thatched cottages which surround it. He is in a class

by himself in the spirit world because of the great power which is attributed to him. His temple is truly a palace and the symbols which are associated with him such as the yellow parasol, the red and gold oriflame, and gleaming arms are those of a lord or a king. He surpasses all the other spirits because of the magnificent cult which surrounds him and the ceremonies held in his honor are those which take place in a royal court. His is the rank of a prince and in the hierarchy of the supernatural world, he outclasses all others.

He is the guardian spirit and as such is the only one who is venerated by the entire village and sanctified by the King, the Son of Heaven. By this sanction he is the representative of the Supreme Being. Because of the unanimous love accorded him by the village, he is its agent and protector.

The guardian spirit is therefore in a class all by himself in the spiritual world which permeates our countryside, much more important than the

other simple spirits of the villages. Of the studies which have been devoted to the cult of the guardian spirit, and there are many, it can be said that the spirits which our villagers worship are practically all those of noted persons from Vietnamese history and folklore.

In examining the background of the guardian spirits, it is possible to divide them into two categories: those of mythological origin, or Thien-Than, and those of historical origin, or Phuc-Than. Those of historical origin are based upon the lives of people who actually existed in our history: the great generals, the illustrious administrators, the celebrated national heroes. Furthermore, it is necessary to take note of the fact that many people have been deified after death while very few have received the honor during their lifetimes.

The guardian spirits all have their recorded histories deposited somewhere in the village Dinh, or community house. These manuscripts, which are looked upon as true relics, are jealously guarded by the villagers who consider it a sacrilege to permit curious strangers to examine them. Nevertheless, certain of these histories have come to light and have given a good idea of the village cult.

Sometimes those figures venerated as guardian spirits are the founders of royal dynasties. Hung-Yuang, the first king of Vietnam, is regarded as the guardian spirit of the village of Co-Tich in the province of Phu-Tho. The village of Hoa-Lu in the province of Ninh-Binh selected as its village spirit one of its own sons who later became the founder of one of the first independent dynasties, King Dinh-Tien-Hoang. The wealthy village of Dinh-Bang has the founder of the Ly dynasty, Ly-Thai-To, as its guardian spirit.

Heroes and heroines of our national independence have also been given the honor of being guardian spirits. The Trung sisters, who have been compared to Joan of Arc, are worshipped by several villages, among which are those of Dong-Nhan and Hat-Mon in the province of Haidong. General Tran-Hung-Dao, the victor over the Mongols during the 13th century, is regarded as the guardian spirit in various villages of the province of Nam-Dinh, his birthplace; of the province of Quang-Yen, the site of his famous battles; and of the province of Hai-Duong, where he was forced in retreat. One of the General's lieutenants, Pham-Ngu-Lao, also became the guardian spirit of his native village of Phu-Ung in the province of Hai-Duong. The village of Thuy-Phuong, located northwest of Hanoi and commonly known as Lang Chem, worships the spirit of one of the capital city's former defenders, Ly-Ong-Trong.

The famous literary figures who have worked for the greatness of the country are not forgotten in this deification. Among those who have become

guardian spirits is Nguyen-Trai, the close advisor and friend of the Emperor Le-Loi, who is the protector of the village of Nhi-Khe.

Those figures who are objects of national veneration are also regarded as such either by their native village or by those villages where they have traveled and made their reputations. But, they have usually achieved the rank of spirit only after death.

Others are chosen during their lifetimes. This has been true with certain illustrious and virtuous mandarins who are looked upon as guardian spirits by those villages which they have founded or caused to be prosperous. Among those achieving such exalted positions while still living have been the mandarins, Nguyen-Cong-Tru, the colonizer of southeast Tonkin and founder of the important districts of Tien-Hai and Kim-Son; and Nguyen-Can, governor of the former province of Luc-Nam and founder of the village of Dong-Lam in the province of Hai-Duong.

Side by side with the illustrious spirits are others of more humble origins. They include those people who have rendered important services to certain villages and who have been deified by the villages after their deaths in gestures of high recognition. Sometimes they have merely been simple farmers who benefited their fellow citizens by clearing new rice fields or discovering new methods of agriculture. At other times they have been obscure partisans who enriched their villages by the introduction of a new type of handicraft.

Nor have the legendary figures from Vietnamese mythology been forgotten in the cult of the guardian spirit. Included as the protectors of certain villages have been the Spirit of the Mountain of Tan-Vien (Ba-Vi), the Champion Chess Player of De-Thich, and the Child Spirit of Giong. They have all been figures who have possessed qualities of valor and courage which make up some of the most beautiful pages of our legendary literature.

One of the more interesting categories of guardian spirits have been those of humble origin who have, for one reason or another, died under unusually dramatic circumstances: the victim of evil doing or of a mortal accident, a drowned child, a poor peasant decapitated by pirates, a thief killed while in flight, or the victim of a grave injustice who has committed suicide. A mystery still envelopes the reasons why unfortunate people and even those who have committed vicious and criminal acts should be selected as village guardian spirits. Asked to explain such an anomaly, the villagers who honor those strange

choices reply that the poor creatures have become guardian spirits because they died at prophetic hours (chết vào giờ thiêng).

In the tranquillity of the Vietnamese countryside, a drowning, a suicide, or a death which has taken place under unusual circumstances all constitute a distraction from the ordinary run of events which the villagers love. The order and peace which usually reigns throughout the Vietnamese countryside because of a healthy and sane frame of mind on the part of its inhabitants is distracted when one of them makes a fool of himself. The offender has trespassed beyond the established code of conduct by his act and is regarded as a supernatural being by his fellow citizens. Thus, he seems to rate a high place in the village Olympus.

The Crown never willingly approved of such sordid choices. But, by a tacit agreement to not interfere in affairs which the villagers regarded as their own, the Government acted only indirectly. It forbade giving those somewhat questionable spirits the traditional royal seal of approval. Certain of those guardian spirits, who were not looked upon with favor by the Emperor, the Son of Heaven, little by little lost their prestige in the eyes of their worshippers who, after a period of time, understood the desires of the Court and proposed other spirits for their villages. The gradual omission of some of the more questionable spirits is not an unknown event in our village annals. Thanks to the indirect and patient attitude on the part of the Government, the true national heroes and the true benefactors of the villages gradually took the places of the phenomenal spirits.

On the one hand, two or more persons can be the guardian spirits of the same village, while on the other hand, one person can be the protector of a number of villages. By the latter, a relationship is created among those villages sharing the same guardian spirit.

It is necessary to take cognizance of the fact that no village guardian spirit comes from the Buddhist Olympus. Buddha and all of his disciples are honored separately in the pagodas, and while there may be a parallelism between the two cults, they never interfere with each other. In our villages the cult of the guardian spirit is an affair of state, whereas the worship of Buddha is a matter of the heart.

In an article devoted to the study of the Dinh, which once appeared in a Hanoi periodical, it was stated that the guardian spirits are, for the most part, figures from Chinese mythology. This is an error which should be corrected for neither the Dinh nor the venerated guardian spirits have Chinese origins. Our village institutions, whether

they be social or religious, have purely Vietnamese origins and not a trace of them exists beyond our northern frontier. Those who have had the occasion to cross the border and wander among the Chinese villages have remarked on the non-existence of the Dinh such as we have at home. No, the Dinh is not Chinese and even less are the guardian spirits who are worshipped there.

Be that as it may, the guardian spirit is the symbol of a supernatural power which has its foundations in the unanimous faith of the total number of village inhabitants. It is also the link which unites all the members of the community in a bloc whose thousand year old solidarity is truly a subject of astonishment for those who have undertaken sociological studies in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese community is not simply a single socialistic unit. Each community has a genuine moral individuality whose total traits are united in a spiritual symbol - the guardian spirit. The guardian spirit represents for everyone in the village the same remembrances and same aspirations. He represents the strong faith of the past, the present, and the future. He is for all the villagers the basis of their faith, and the norm upon which they base their conduct. Those who conduct themselves well receive his favors in the form of good harvests and all around prosperity. Those who behave badly are certain to be visited by such catastrophies as sickness, fires, and floods, as proof that they cannot overlook his power. It is possible that all of this is nothing more than superstition. But, within the peasant society, the dread of a spirit is the very foundation of understanding and is especially the basis of a nationwide fellowship which has been a strong driving force in the nation.

All this tangles and involves itself in the village life, in individual behavior and in collective behavior, reacting upon each other in the immutable game in which the master is none other than the guardian spirit. Every gesture and every act which is not part of this game upsets it and constitutes a crime against the spirit which will be punished. The guardian spirit acts the part of the Goddess of Justice.

For those who have had the chance to live in the Vietnamese countryside and for those who happen to be musicians, it is difficult not to notice a similarity between the life there and a certain symphony. Our Vietnamese pastoral symphony throughout thousands of generations of villagers is played under the baton of an invisible conductor who is none other than the guardian spirit. He also wields the baton to orchestrate the communal harmony with the music of the spheres.



## CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS OF PRESENT PROBLEMS

by Paul Mus

The background is the typical Vietnamese village. There are millions of villagers compared to the tens of thousands of people in the Vietnamese towns. The background is mainly rural and the problems they face very often are carried to them by the urban population - the few to the many.

Twenty centuries have gone into the cultural preparation of today's Viet-Nam, and most of it has taken place in the village. (To those of you who have not already done so, I strongly recommend that you read Gerald C. Hickey's Village in Viet-Nam.)

The Vietnamese village is slowly but definitely moving. My sixty years or so in Indochina have helped me to understand how essential it is that at last the Vietnamese are moving forward. On the other hand, they do not know the problems ahead and it is here that it becomes terribly difficult to be a counselor. Perhaps giving advice is easier than being a colonizer, but it is only second in difficulty.

Happily I am addressing America, the country whose philosophy - native, genuine, "aboriginal" - is closest to Asia, the land of pragmatism. There is an Asian pragmatism which has been missed completely by the Europeans. I will not go into metaphysics; it is too expensive when translated into political experiences. Nor do I like to use the singular in talking of the differences we should have in mind when we approach Asia. Within Asia there are deep differences, but none of the Asias fit into our picture of Greek and Latin reason and abstraction. May I add France? Not that I glorify my country for it, but I think that Descartes was, if I may use the expression, the last feather to break the back of the camel.

When an Asian approaches us (and I am speaking of my friends with whom I have spent half my life), he is astounded to see how we withdraw into our thinking. We remove the man. Look at Descartes. Descartes, sitting in what they call a stove, which was

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not a stove at all but a room with a stove, making total abstractions of everything and starting from scratch to rebuild the world on pure reason without putting anything of himself into it. Quite often, unfortunately, that is the view of the academicians in our part of the world. We want to deal in matters that are so purely intellectual that any man should grasp the meaning, but there is no passion in our reasoning. This is especially true with the French more than any other country. Thank God we have the British. I have been trained in British commando schools and I deeply admire the British people. They are very obnoxious sometimes, but they are perhaps a great cure for French abstraction. When you live a few years with the British, you see another side of the question.

Asia has two kinds of problems, one of which is the problem we impose upon her. We want Asians to take their destiny into their own hands. Americans believe that when a man has been given the right to vote, he has been given himself. You give personality to the man who has the right to vote and to you, that is the very expression of man. But this entails a constitution; it means ideals, principles, consequences, organization. I was there when the French tried. My feeling is that the Asians do not follow us. They do not follow the idea that one must have a constitution or that the constitution binds together a certain number of people. We count our votes and the majority makes for unanimity. Although the minority should maintain its critical point of view, for purposes of action the majority has the quality of unanimity.

Asians (or Africans, with whom I spent three years) will never swallow that. They do not feel you can translate a majority into terms of unanimity. You may not know that many hands were involved in drafting the French constitution of 1946; the constitution was heterogeneous but it had to be polished and put into good French shape. Leopold Senghor, a scholar and a very clever politician, was put in charge of polishing the French constitution; it was written with the pen of Leopold Senghor. Now I would like to quote a statement made by Leopold Senghor, after he became President of Senegal: "We are not interested in minorities; we are interested in unanimity." This statement should be a warning to us.

We have problems and we have solutions and we feel that we have done our duty toward the Vietnamese by giving them our solution to the problem. But there is no communication. We want the Vietnamese to exercise the right to vote and we preached the doctrine that a man is a man only insofar as he has the ballot, otherwise he is a subject, not a citizen. This is a principle which we must convince Asians to accept if the world is to become a worthwhile place in which to live. That, you see, is the terrible problem. We have our problems and our solutions, but the problem often does not exist for the Asians. I am speaking here of the average Asian, the average Vietnamese. This is how he reacted: "Why should we get involved? Why should we add our voice, our

vote? If the program is bound to succeed, the Americans or the French, our counselors, would involve themselves and take credit for its success. If they 'pass the baby' to us, if they want us to vote on those issues about which we know so little, it's because it will fail and once it has failed, they will tell us, 'Well, you asked for it.'

To summarize, I am giving you a serious warning about your good will even though you are basically right. You are right, but there is no communication. Do not be hasty and do not believe that such a thing as the right to vote is the solution. It is the problem. It is a solution only in the long run. For the time being, you have the problem of convincing the Vietnamese that it is the solution. And although they should understand that it is a solution, they are not prepared for it.

In a recent conversation with an important adviser to the United States government, he told me that America's aim in Vietnam is to seek a coherent responsibility. Coherent responsibility: "responsibility" means a decision has been reached and "coherent" means there was unanimity in making the decision. This is the aim but it is not the solution. In preparing for this aim, don't follow the French method of going into Vietnam with principles. The French people are famous for principles; they have a wonderful way of making statements in a definite, precise way. The European mind, based on the Greek, Latin, and to some degree, the French tradition, subtract personality from reasoning, as compared to the British who are empiric and the Americans who are pragmatic. Then we meet the Asians whose reasoning is the reverse.

When I was a young man I decided to try to understand what had been going on in China many centuries before the Christian era. In my studies, I came upon a well-known story which for the Vietnamese has meaning and understanding: There was trouble in the State of Lu, the birthplace of Confucius. The reigning monarch asked the prince to seek the help of Confucius, and to paraphrase the Chinese text, Confucius sat in public the correct way, facing south; he behaved in the correct manner and the trouble disappeared. When you meet this sort of thing, it's a danger signal. Until you are able to understand what it means, you are not safe with people. Sit and try to behave in such a way that all the problems will disappear. Just try it.

Now we reach the crux of the matter. We think in terms of concepts. They think in terms of the complete man. You should not be ashamed of your great thinkers, Charles Peirce and William James who, although contradictory, have not been given the attention they deserve by the Europeans. You will find that Asia is in close agreement especially with Peirce because he replaced concepts by behavior.

What is the difference between behavior and conceptual attitudes? The man who thinks in terms of behavior rather than in abstract principles does not dwell on concepts. Peirce has said that when we have a concept and we arrive at the sum of all the results that are derived from that concept, this is our conception and the rest is nothing. Confucius was not interested in concepts because he was interested in the total man and concept is merely a part of the total man. William James is more difficult because he insisted so much on the individual experience. But Peirce is perfect. I should say that Confucius is Peircian but I cannot allow my indirect American patriotism to go that far. I will say that Peirce is Confucian. Confucius is interested in behavior and asks that you behave in the proper way and the rest will follow.

I have here the "key" to Asia: It is a drawing implement. It's a curve which has no equation. It is comparable to the French and it is called the French curve. In Asia we have the proper curve of events - the curve of behavior which will connect a few elements to build a total which is coherent. Once again, the notion of the total. I will tell you how the curve works.

On the 9th of March, 1945, the Japanese pounced on the French and because there were some 200,000 against 20,000, it was a very short fight. It was some time after that I had the very interesting experience of going through Vietnamese villages at night. This is an instance when dealing with people, not with abstract ideas, becomes important. At that time I was a representative of Charles de Gaulle, and I could not afford to be taken alive by the Japanese. For two years I had been with the British Commando Troops and I knew so much that I had either to escape or to disappear. I tried to escape and I did. As far as I know this unusual experience has not been made public.

I left Hanoi at night. In the background huge explosions could be seen above Hanoi. Huge mushroom clouds, though not exactly the same that were to appear later in Japan. But they were sizable. They were the ammunition dumps that the last garrisons of the French Army were blowing up before their surrender. The Vietnamese who were with me looked at the explosions and said: "Such explosions so big!" They believed they were shells. "Such explosions cannot be made except by the 'me' people. 'Me' - that's you, the Americans. "So, the Americans are here and the French are safe." It was then they decided to help me.

They learned the next day that American shells and bombs were not involved and it was then that I had to change from the position of importance, that big circle. I had to change to a small one. And I did in the proper way. If I had simply vanished into subservience, if I had not stood my ground, I would have been handed over to the Japanese immediately.

At about eleven o'clock at night I arrived at the home of a Catholic Vietnamese, about 500 yards from the Japanese outpost.

I asked for a guide to help me, at night of course, through the remaining Japanese forces. I had made certain preparations. (Always be prepared.) I had no money but I had deliberately chosen a friend with whom I hoped to escape because he had money. He had five or six thousand piastres. I had one five hundred piastre banknote which I had hidden, but hidden in such a way that the Vietnamese knew that I had it.

My discussion took place with a Vietnamese lady. When the discussion began, she mentioned the money. I had to have in mind a pattern; I had to behave in such a way that the "curve" would fit into her "curve". She was talking to a man who represented something, but not much, who had represented more, but who was likely to represent even less in the future. Remember that my position was of little significance. My head felt very light because I knew they simply had to call "Ho!" and the Japanese would come. In fact, there was perhaps a two or three thousand piastre reward for my capture. But I had the right angle and she was dealing with me, not on a basis of equality, but on one of adjustment. Vietnamese society is built on an adjustment of differences and in that case, I had adjusted. I behaved in the way I should have. I had no weapons. I was totally in the hands of the lady plus about fifteen men who surrounded me. That we had been haggling from eleven at night until three in the morning indicates there is something more than just abstractions with the Vietnamese. Where we are logical, they are behaviorists. I behaved properly. I was not noisy. I was not depressed. Finally at three o'clock in the morning I decided to give her the five hundred piastre note. She said, "I got it."

The point I am making is that we had been in a state of sociability. The sociologist, George Gurvitch, is outstanding in his differentiation between sociology, macrosociology and what he calls sociability. Sociability is not an institution; it is a contact. Sociability is communication which I can support by the excellent definition given it by two great scholars who are the founders of the school of semantics in Chicago. Hayakawa and Korzybski have defined communication as follows: "Communication exists when each party is able to state the position of the other in terms the latter accepts." This is something that should be taught Americans who go to Asia. It should be observed that you do not have to admit to the Asian's position; you must state it in terms he will accept. And until you are able to do so, there is no use in trying to reach agreement with him.

So you see I was able to escape through the Japanese lines to China. But throughout the plan there was a pattern, not concepts. The pattern follows the precepts of Lao Tzu, the father of Taoism, the pattern of going west. I was going the right way. I was getting out. Going west has a meaning for Americans too.

Going west is getting out of the picture. All of this may seem to be insisting too much on small details, but wait. When I reached my French commander, he said, "Well, the Vietnamese side with us . . . " "Excuse me, sir," I said, "when we are going - when we are going west like Lao Tzu. Do not send people east who will come back into the picture. I was going out of the picture properly, behaving like a gentleman. But if you send people back into the picture, they will court trouble." I must add that no one listened to me and that the French and British sent some **fifty fine** boys, aged 22 to 25, who had been through the French Resistance, and all of them were killed by the same Vietnamese who helped me through the Japanese lines. My pattern had been westward and their was eastward.

It is important that Americans put aside the French abstract way of thinking but they should not drop the American optimistic approach to humanity. The last hope of the world is that the American people remain optimistic in their approach to humanity, but not to push it forward as a tool.

Although I deeply regret that America is using napalm in Viet-Nam, I must add immediately that I am not one of those who suggests that you must get out of Viet-Nam and that all will be all right because I know what the stakes are. The one thing we must clearly have in mind is to try to see not only principles but men. Even when principles are right, as principles are right, we must allow for a time during which the evidence reaches the Vietnamese. I am trying to state the position of the Vietnamese in terms they will accept. I have many Vietnamese friends and I believe that they will accept what I am saying. But I do not know many Vietnamese who are able to state the position of America in terms that you and I will accept.

I hope that my message is not one of complete doubt. I would like to cite an example of one of the biggest mistakes that the well-intentioned American can make. It happened in Calcutta; the year was 1944. In a poor, but good Brahmanic suburb of Calcutta, a servant girl was going to the town water tap to get water for the family. She carried a big pitcher on her head, and because the pitcher was very big, once filled, it was heavy. She was trying to put the pitcher of water on her head when an American G.I. standing on the curb rushed to help her. It was so typical of an American - rushing to help. He grasped the mouth of the pitcher and placed it on the head of the girl, committing at the same time the most horrible act in the world. He put his barbaric fingers into the water of the family. The water had to be thrown away and the pitcher, if not broken, at least given to the Brahman for exorcism. That is what you had done. Your G.I. was you. The girl looked at him. She was very sad, yet seldom have I seen as much friendship as I saw in her eyes. It was very moving. She

went through millenniums of prejudice. She suffered all that society had built between her and the world as it is. And she had seen through it. I am certain that she was thinking, "Well, it is terrible what he has done, but what a nice fellow."

Even though many of the things I am saying are not very encouraging, I think you should continue trying to understand and to be understood. I believe the Americans have the patience to solve the problem. You have a good jaw. Perhaps I am prejudiced because I teach at Yale, but the jaw of the bulldog is very well-known. Tenacity is American and tenacity calls - sometimes dramatically - for understanding on both sides.

We must go into more detail about the background of the Vietnamese before we can predict their reaction. Starting from the point that the Vietnamese are more interested in behavior than in ideas, more interested in the man complete than in an abstraction, what part does Confucianism, Buddhism or folklore have in forming the whole picture? I think that to understand why the Vietnamese are more interested in behavior than in principles is that they have not been trained in concepts and reasoning. They have been trained by a Confucian civilisation which impressed upon the people the way they should behave. I would call Confucianism "directed behaviorism," much as you say "directed economy." Confucianism is not descriptive. It is not descriptive as is the pragmatism of the Americans. It is injunctive. It tells people how to behave.

If I show my students at Yale, who are outstanding in their studies but also in sports, that the secret to weight throwing is that the center of gravity of the weight should be as close as possible to the center of one's head, they will improve their performance by two or three feet. An equation can be made of this and written on the blackboard. I told this to an outstanding French mathematics student and although he understood the equation, he did not improve his performance. If I had shown him the way, he would have improved.

And that is Confucianism. Confucius showed to the people what they should do without going into detail about concepts. Peirce says: A conception has consequences and those consequences are all that we put into conception; the rest is nothing. That is exactly what Confucius teaches. Let us take one more example: Once someone asked Confucius about the worship of the dead. He said, "You do not know how to behave with the living; why do you ask me about the dead?" That is a Peircism, not William James.

The Vietnamese have been instructed by an aristocracy which did not explain but which showed the way to do things. Do not believe that man changes much because of his skin or because of latitudes. Man I have found the same everywhere, but not cultures. And the culture of the Vietnamese involves something in which they have a stake.

If we look at the picture that is usually found in books about Viet-Nam, we see people in the villages. In old Viet-Nam the towns were very poor and of no importance. (Except for one or two ports and administrative centers, there were no big towns which, incidentally, is one of the great differences between Viet-Nam and China.) The books show the people secluded in their village life. The villagers used a popular Vietnamese rather than Chinese or Sino-Vietnamese spoken in the towns. The townspeople did not bother to explain anything but just showed the way to behave. This is the picture the French historian has of Viet-Nam.

It is a totally wrong picture. It is wrong and inhuman and very dangerous. I am afraid that some of the mistakes which have been made by the French and now by the Americans, may stem from this misunderstanding. The village is considered as passive because it just follows the ways that are shown but not explained by the aristocracy. The French say the village is passive. The French Communists or the Vietnamese Communists who, to a degree, have followed the line of the French Communists, say there is a local oligarchy in the villages which is exploiting the Vietnamese and that the Vietnamese people live in a state of obscurity, of indifference, or inaction. We were a bit surprised when in 1945 we had to fight the guerrilla - the same inactive, indifferent, passive Vietnamese. We have found out what devils they are when they have a purpose. And they have a purpose.

The Vietnamese Communists are pragmatists too in a way. They want to give the villagers as many reasons as possible for hating the French colonialists and the American capitalists. They try to insist that if left alone, the villagers fundamentally are Communists. This is not true. The ancient Vietnamese and Chinese societies were not communistic at all. There was no market economy; there was a peasants' agreement. How can you have communism without a market economy? But Mao Tse-tung has set the pace. In the vocabulary of Mao Tse-tung, there were rich peasants and poor peasants in Viet-Nam during the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, the rich peasants were scorching the poor peasants. That is not true. There were no big landowners in the history of Viet-Nam as far as we know. Thus the image that the Vietnamese Communist Party, with the help of the French, would have us believe is not true.

The most intimate approach to the problem of Ho Chi Minh was told me by a Vietnamese friend during the time that Bao Dai was in power. My friend told me, "Bao Dai does not fit into the picture. He is circular and Ho Chi Minh is angular. Ho Chi Minh is pointed whereas Bao Dai is circular like a drop of water. Like water, he will rot everything he touches. What we want is fire - pointed fire and flames like Ho Chi Minh. He will scorch the earth and destroy the pests," said my Vietnamese friend. "If the situation becomes better, we will have no need of such pointed fellows. It will be the time of the round ones." I cannot say that this is wisdom. The reader must decide. One of the greatest mistakes



in trying to appreciate East Asia is our belief that they are opportunists. As I told you, on the 9th of March, 1945, they believed that the Americans would help the French and the French were still considered important. Overnight, when the Vietnamese realized no American help was coming, the French were simply out of the picture. Is this ingratitude? No. It is piety. Heaven has made its choice. It is a pious way of obedience to the will of heaven. The will of heaven, without any bad feelings about the French, had been revealed because the Japanese had the upper hand. (I think in terms of images rather than in terms of concepts. We have made so many mistakes with concepts.) What appears to the Westerner as complete ingratitude and opportunism to the Asian is a deeply moral reaction to success. It is not ingratitude and it is not opportunism. They felt that heaven had decided in favor of Japan. It is like trumps at a game of cards. It's just like diamonds instead of clubs. A man who would support the French once the Japanese are trumps is a fool and they don't want to be fools. This is the way they behave; not knowing what actually is going on, they wait for the results.

I am quite confident that there are several distinguished Sinologists among the readers who will recall that in the Chinese vision of the world, the people were the eyes and ears of heaven. When we Westerners say the people are the eyes and ears of heaven, we believe them to have a high degree of intelligence. But to the Chinese and the Vietnamese, it means they can detect those who have the good cards and those who have the bad cards, the ones who have trumps and the ones who have not. It is a function of the people to select the beneficiary of the mandate of heaven.

Many people who know the Vietnamese and know them intimately, will tell you there is no Buddhism that is really alive in Vietnam. This is true but it's a truth which is spasmodic. That is, when the world goes on in an even way, Confucian behaviorism - directed, staid behaviorism - is enough for all problems. But then there is what is known as interregnum, when heaven has not made up its mind as to what will come next. So when there is trouble, when the will of heaven is not known and one is in the state of interregnum, Buddhism comes to the fore. Buddhism is an alternative when the temperament of history and the world change. It was at such a time that the first Buddhist monk cremated himself, at a moment of crisis. When the Diem regime fired on the Vietnamese and killed many young boys and girls, the Vietnamese became indignant and at that moment, they were Buddhists. It was the pattern; the pattern of indignation is Buddhist rather than Confucian. And that is one of the wisdoms of Asia, is it not? At that moment, they believed they had to alert the world to what is happening and for that reason they sacrificed themselves. I greatly admire the two or three who sacrificed themselves in the beginning, but I do not approve of the superiors allowing a boy of

eighteen to do the same. A young man with all the exuberance of the state of sacrifice should definitely not have been allowed to follow the others. I do not reproach the young man for his heroism, but I do not approve of the convent allowing him to make the sacrifice.

I think, for instance, that generally speaking the Asians admire the achievements of the Soviets in science; it's the color of heaven. They have the feeling that the Russians have trumps. They believe that the will of heaven is balanced and some of the Asians believe it is in favor of the Russians. Let us take the case of the Korean War. The South Koreans were fighting the North Koreans. The Chinese support the North, the Americans supported the South. In that picture, Russia was above all four. The Russians were able to remain uninvolved. They kept their balance and by so doing, they gained in prestige, which is a factor that has gone unobserved by the West. Because the Russians were not involved, it appeared that they were at a superior level. Although the strength of China cannot be compared with the strength of America, for the Asians it was not a matter of numbers or figures or capacity, but one of appearances, shapes and forms. In this instance, the Americans were balanced by the Chinese and on top were the Russians. I believe this to be one of Russia's greatest achievements in the last fifteen years.

I hope I have been able to convey to you what I feel. I have told you that two things are dangerous. One is to try, because we are right, to believe that our aims and ideals are immediately understood and seen; the other is to overlook the reality that the Vietnamese have good reasons for their attitudes. Instead of considering them as ungrateful and as opportunists, just remember that they have had no civic preparation. They have not made the city, as did the Greeks and the Romans and to some degree, the Americans have done. And having no citizens, they must find a way to bring reason into the world. They appreciate their kings and their leaders for the results which accrue to them. They have no concept of the value of the ballot box. If a government is successful, to the Vietnamese that is proof that it is good. I know this is not the best way and I know that under the present world conditions, we will have to change it. But I say, do not expect them to understand at first. They are very intelligent, but they must change completely their angle.



# THE RELIGIONS OF VIETNAM



To Americans the swastika is the symbol of the worst man can do to man. But to many Vietnamese a similar sign is one of the most sacred of religious symbols.

So simple and yet so great can be misunderstandings between Americans and Vietnamese unless we as visitors seek to know more about the people among whom we live, work and fight.

Some knowledge of religion in Vietnam is fundamental to an appreciation of every phase of Vietnamese life, because religious beliefs richly color almost every Vietnamese thought and act, and affect the way they react to us and what we do.

We come from a different culture than the Vietnamese. Regardless of our individual faiths, we all have been conditioned by the concepts of our Judeo-Christian culture.

In large part, Vietnamese culture and religion differ greatly from what we are accustomed to. Therefore we may at first find them strange.

To avoid offending and even alienating a people with traditions just as old or older than ours we must develop understanding and tolerance of their religion, their values, their way of thinking and acting.

Religious freedom is one of the principles on which our nation was founded, the right of each person to believe and worship as he pleases. We will find in Vietnam a tradition of religious tolerance inherited from the ancient Buddhists.

To the Vietnamese, and to hundreds of millions of other people in Asia, their religious beliefs are sacred, as sacred to them as our beliefs are to us, and perhaps more a part of their lives than ours are of ours. In Vietnam, then, we can do no less than try to understand and respect the beliefs of the people.

Vietnam has no state religion. Often it is considered a predominantly Buddhist nation, but this classification can be misleading. One simplified classification lists 20 per cent as Buddhists, 20 per cent as non-Buddhists and 60 per cent as nominal but non-practicing Buddhists.

All the world's great religions can be found in Vietnam. At least four major beliefs have had a profound impact on the people and their culture and are reflected subtly or obviously in behavior and customs. These are Animism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.

Christianity entered Vietnam later and is now a religious force. Other beliefs such as Bahaism also have gained followings. Underlying all is a prevailing ancestor veneration.

The result is a blend or synthesis of beliefs in which the forms and practices are peculiarly Vietnamese. Buddhism in Vietnam is unlike Buddhism in—for instance—Thailand.

Catholics may practice ancestor veneration and Buddhists may adhere also to the principles of Confucianism. Relatively few people could be said to be purely of one religious belief although they may say they are when asked.

Differences in religious practices may vary also from one level of society to another—westernized urban to traditionalists to rural villagers.

The Viet Cong are well aware of the importance of religion in Vietnamese life. They use the people's beliefs in any way they can, although they do not always respect the beliefs.

Our conduct in this country must reflect respect for the symbols and places held sacred, must take these things into account when we enter areas on operations, must consider them in psychological operations, and must recognize their influence during social contacts.

This pamphlet provides a general explanation of the major religions in Vietnam and illustrates symbols and places that an American should recognize.

# Animism

The influence of animism can be found to some degree in the beliefs and practices of the majority of Vietnamese, although more so in the rural areas. Animism, also called the "people's religion," is the religion of the Montagnards.

Animism is a belief in spirits, both of dead persons and those of some inanimate objects such as stones, rivers, mountains and trees. This belief holds that each person has a spirit, which continues to exist even after death has claimed its possessor.

Because the spirit continues an independent existence, it must be cared for properly and provided with its needs and desires in its spirit state. Unattended spirits may become angry, bitter or revengeful and seek to re-enter the earthly life, which would create havoc in numerous ways.

As spirits are associated with people, Animists believe them to be greedy, deceptive, unpredictable, and possessing every trait known to man. Normally, the spirits of departed good people do not create too much concern if the proper rites are performed at the appropriate

times, especially those rites which will send them happily on their way to the spirit world.

Those who die violently as in accidents or war, are killed by tigers, women who die in childbirth or who die childless, or those whose bodies are not recovered and properly buried or cremated; all cause great fear because their spirits are embittered by such a fate and are hostile to individuals, families or communities.

Throughout his life the Animist is fearful of offending the spirits that can cause him harm. He tries to worship and live his everyday life in such a manner as not to offend them, and to placate them in case he has unwittingly offended.

Because the Animist believes that the spirits are somewhat humanized, he believes that they can be influenced as humans are, and that they have the same capacity for doing good and evil. Basically, the animist seeks to influence his gods and spirits by elaborate ceremonies, flattery, cajolery and sometimes by angry words and actions in almost exactly the same manner that men are influenced.

The Animist does not view himself as a helpless or passive victim of the invisible spirit world, but as one who by the use of the proper formulas can achieve his own goals. In his continuous power struggle with the spirit world he grapples for the best advantages so that he may avoid that which otherwise seems certain and dreadful.

The Animist spends much of his thought, effort, energy and wealth in observances and rites which will cause the spirits to do the will of the worshiper and which will placate those spirits that can do him harm.

To do this, elaborate rituals and ceremonies are conducted and offerings, sometimes blood sacrifices, are made. These are accompanied by incantations and prayers.

Surrounded as he is by the spirit world, the Animist is constantly on the lookout for those spirits who demand immediate attention, a situation which cannot be ignored with impunity. To aid in this search he seeks help from the important man of his village, the sorcerer. (In northern Vietnam the sorcerer is of less importance than the village chief or clan chief.)

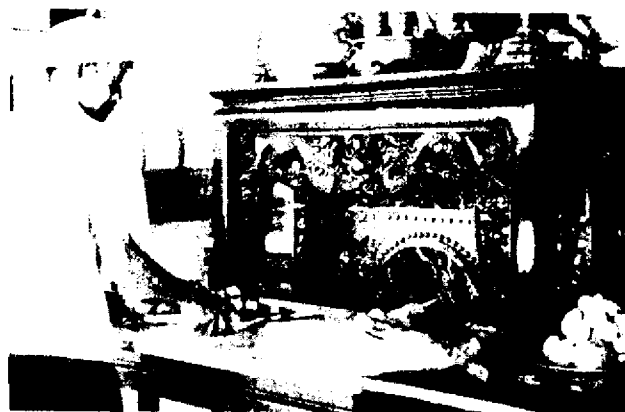
Americans, too, should show special respect to these persons because of the place of esteem they hold in the Animist community.

The Animist also places great emphasis on omens which may come in dreams or may appear as signs for these are believed to be sent by the spirits to warn of future evil or good.

A dog sneezing at a wedding is a sign that the marriage is not a wise one, and normally the ceremony is halted immediately. The track of an animal across a path in the jungle may be an indication of evil and the traveler may return home to seek advice on whether to continue his journey.

The Animists see sickness and death as being spirit-related and so take measures particularly to protect children. Parents may give children nicknames, often very unfavorable ones, and keep the real name in strictest confidence in order to decoy the spirits away from a child.

A similar custom is related to the fact that boys are more highly regarded than girls, therefore if a boy



Providing food for ancestors and other spirits is general practice in many Vietnamese ceremonies.

is sickly, he may be dressed as a girl or one earring put in a boy's ear in order to fool the spirits into thinking that the child is a girl.

Another important concept, again widespread in Vietnam, is that the dead must be properly buried, with the correct ceremonies, or the spirit will forever wander. This belief is played upon in our psychological operations against the VC and NVA who are unable to give proper burials to many of their dead.

The enemy also makes use of the belief when they mutilate and decapitate bodies. In so doing, they harm not just the body but the spirit, too.

Various other customs are based on the fear of spirits and attempts to prevent their doing harm. Mirrors are placed in doors for a spirit will be frightened at seeing himself and not enter. Likewise red papers representing the god of the threshold may be fixed to doorposts to frighten spirits. Barriers may be erected along pathways leading to a village to stop spirits.

For every part of an Animist's life from birth to burial the spirits are his constant companion to be feared and placated and his beliefs about them control his every action.

## Taoism

Taoism (pronounced dowism) had its beginning in China. Lao Tse (the Old One) is generally credited with being its founder. It is essentially of Chinese origin and entered Vietnam with the conquering Chinese armies, unless the Vietnamese brought it with them when they migrated to the Red River delta from China.

Lao Tse lived about 600 B.C. making the religion he is said to have founded slightly older than Confucianism and Buddhism.

Essentially the Dao, or way, taught by Lao Tse is a road or way of life by which a man attains harmony

with nature as well as with the mystical currents of the spiritual world. A Taoist accepts all things as they are and attempts to attune his thinking and actions to things as they are; never fighting against them.

Most Taoist worship, rituals and ceremonies are attempts to assist man to attune himself to the universe. To the Western mind it would appear that Taoists use magic, witchcraft, fortune-telling and astrology in their worship.

It may appear to one who adheres to one of the Western religions as mummary, but to the Taoist all

his religious activities have a deep spiritual meaning.

Taoists are not usually spirit worshippers although there is an animistic flavor to Taoism, and some beliefs may seem similar. Taoists believe that God's spirit can animate inanimate objects, while animists believe that these objects have spirits of their own.

The basic doctrines of Taoism seem to the Western mind to be:

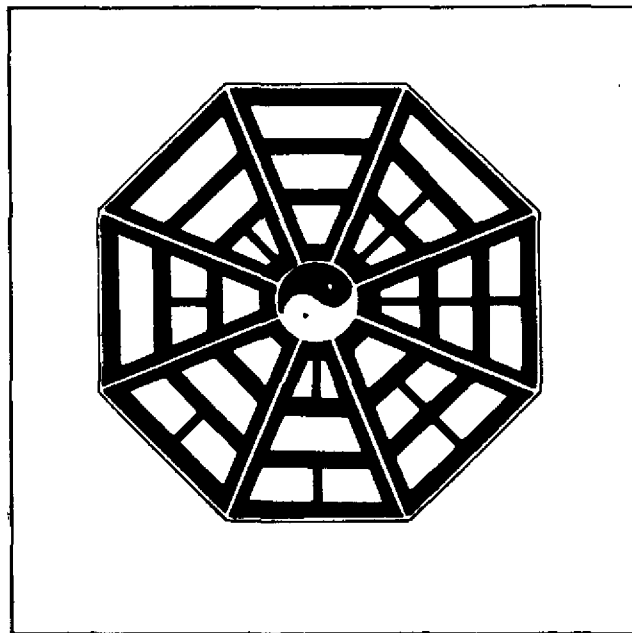
- The universe, including the nature of the physical and spiritual worlds, is supreme.
- For every positive factor in the universe there is an opposing negative factor.
- All these factors exert influence on all facets of the Taoist's life.
- The positive and negative factors are as they are and cannot be changed; however, by astrology and divining a Taoist priest can forecast which factor can be in greater power at a given day, month or year.
- The universe is controlled by a mystical, almost mythical supreme being from whom occasional mandates come to rulers or priests.
- The elements—metal, wood, water, fire and earth—form the basis for the religious rites of Taoism.

Taoists believe in one supreme being, the Emperor of Jade, and worship him, other deities who assist him, and ancestors.

The two principal assistants to the Emperor of Jade are Nam Tao and Bac Dau, who keep the register of all beings in the universe.

Although Taoism has a limited formal organization in Vietnam today, the concepts of Taoism are in evidence in the daily life cycle of the Vietnamese.

Many of the more basic beliefs and practices of Taoism have been absorbed into other religions found



Taoist symbol "bat quai" is widely used as talisman in Vietnam. Its core represents creation of universe, its eight figures the law of change.

in Vietnam, and affect the cultural patterns.

These ideas are to be observed in older medical practices; the consultation of horoscopes and astrologers in making marriage arrangements, the selection of auspicious dates, and in the ceremonies of worship pertaining to Spring, Fall, the ploughing of the land and planting of the seed.

## Confucianism

Like Taoism, and to some extent Buddhism, Confucianism came to Vietnam from China. In the mixture of religious and philosophies which have contributed to the moulding of the Vietnamese character, Confucianism has held an important place and will help us to understand much about the Vietnamese today. It is part of the cultural environment in which they are born.

Confucius, who lived 2,500 years ago, never attempted to found a religion but was content to be a scholar and teacher.

He introduced no new religious ideas and never professed to be original. Instead he held fast to ancient rites and customs, and his ethics were his chief contribution. He did not indulge in abstract philosophizing; for him man was the measure of all things.

In his teachings he combined politics, ethics and education and imbued disciples with the spirit of reverence and devotion.

His ideas survived the inroads of other major religions and lived on while dynasties rose and fell for more than 25 centuries.

### The Life of Confucius

Confucius was born in Shantung, China, in 551 B.C., one of 11 children whose father died when Confucius was three. His early life was spent in poverty. Largely self-educated, he became China's most noted educator and learned man.

His Chinese name K'ung Fu-tze was Latinized to Confucius by Jesuit missionaries.

Confucius became an overseer of public lands at 19. A few years later he married, left this position and founded a school for instruction in conduct and government.

After 29 years of successful teaching he was appointed town magistrate when he was 51 and in fou

years advanced to chief justice of his state. The state ruler, Duke Ting, impressed with Confucius' teachings, followed them to the point of greatly improving his government and his people's lot. Then Confucius resigned.

The teacher-philosopher wandered for 13 years from state to state, trying to interest feudal lords in his ideas and ideals. This period of self-imposed exile, with its hardship and danger, helped spread his fame as a teacher and reformer and attracted many disciples.

When Confucius was 68 years old he returned to his home. There he completed work on the ancient Chinese classics, edited "The Book of Songs" (containing 308 songs and several anthems), wrote a chronicle of his native state and a book detailing the classic rites. He also began writing the "Analects" or "Sayings of Confucius," which were completed by his disciples.

These writings became the foundation of Confucianism.

He died in 479 B.C., disappointed because his ideas were not adopted. But in 140 B.C., Emperor Han Wu-Ti made Confucianism a state religion.

Succeeding emperors built temples in his honor in every district of China, and imperial colleges were established which taught the Confucian Classics. Graduation from these schools, or passing an examination based on his teachings, opened the door to social and official life until 1912.

His emphasis on ancestral reverence continued into modern times. When the Tientsin-Pukow railroad was being built the railroad authorities were influenced by his descendants to divert it five miles from the town so as not to disturb his resting place. This year Red Guards desecrated Confucius' tomb, the first known exception to this tradition.

His teachings exerted such an influence on China and the rest of Southeast Asia that Confucius is recognized as one of the most influential men in world history.

### Teachings of Confucius

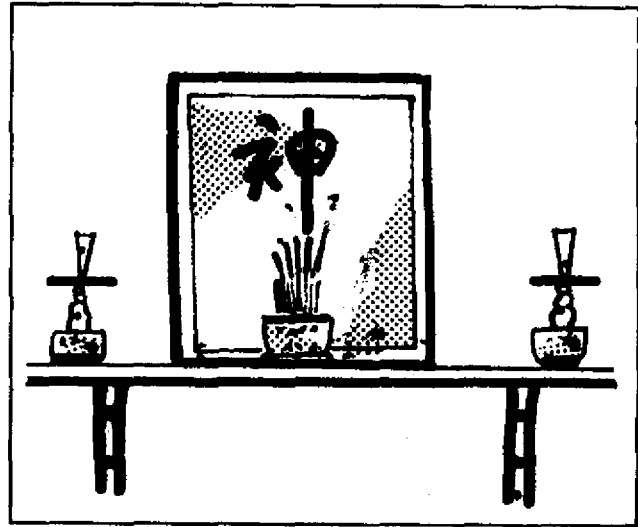
*"Learning knows no rank."*

Confucius lived in a time of strife and anarchy. His teachings called, not for the salvation of the soul, but for good government and harmonious relations among men. He taught that men should be more conscious of their obligations than of their rights.

As taught in Vietnam today, followers of Confucius are charged with five obligations or ordinary duties:

1. Nhan—love and humanity.
2. Nghia—right actions in expressing love and humanity.
3. Le—observation of the rites or rules of ceremony and courtesy.
4. Tri—the duty to be educated.
5. Tin—self-confidence and fidelity toward others.

There are nine conditions under which the individual correctly performs these duties. When the duties are performed under the nine conditions, the person reaches the goal of life which is achievement of the three cardinal virtues—the correct performance of three relationships. These are:



Families maintain "ancestor shelf" to venerate ancestors.

King and subject (Fatherland and citizen)  
Teacher and pupil  
Father and children

(References in English usually list five Confucian relationships as follows:

Ruler and subject, father and son, elder and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend.)

Although subordination to the superior is directed in each case, the superior has duties and responsibilities toward the junior whether it be ruler to subject or father to children.

Reverence and respect are not owed the superior blindly. A son may, with respect, correct a father, and a people may withdraw the mandate from a ruler who does not truly fulfill his function. The individual's primary obligation is to his ruler, then his teacher, and finally his father although later Confucian teachings have stressed filial piety.

A general rule to be observed in relationships with others is: "Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you."

One of the conditions for performance of the five duties was taught by Confucius in his work, the **Chung Yung** which has been translated as **Doctrine of the Mean**. Actually Confucius meant much more than is implied by the word "mean," or middle way.

He taught moderation and equilibrium, and harmony in actions, but advocated that a person might use the maximum means necessary. What he deplored was an excess beyond what is required to accomplish a desired end.

To this end, he taught "Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness."

As the object of all Confucian teachings was the perfect moral individual and a harmonious social order, the basis for obtaining these goals was the "superior, noble or princely man."

Such a man would know how he ought to live with moderation and harmony in everything. From this superior man would grow a harmonious family and a perfect state.

One of the most frequently preached Confucian doctrines was Government by Example. Government was to be in the hands of the educated and virtuous who by their example would bring about the perfect state.

Confucius also taught the responsibilities of the state in serving the needs of the governed, a somewhat liberal view of the purpose of government for the age in which he lived.

While Confucius was a humanist whose teachings were ethical, he recognized existing beliefs in a Supreme Being; by his teachings, insistence on the observance of existing rites and customs, he perpetuated religion as a part of Confucianism.

Ancestor veneration was perpetuated also both by the precept of filial piety and the observance of rites for the ancestors. A basic Confucian precept and the basis of ancestor veneration is that children serve their parents, an obligation equally as binding after the parents' death as when they are living.

#### **Confucianism In Vietnam**

The Chinese Emperor Han Wu-Ti placed Vietnam under a military governor in 111 B.C., and for the next 900 years events in Vietnam were part of Chinese history.

In this period Chinese technology and culture came to Vietnam and were accepted under a rule of moderation and semi-independence.

The influence of Confucianism on early art was important, with the painters following his Doctrine of the Mean: neither too much nor too little; no overcrowding of details; not too many nor too bright colors, just enough to obtain the desired effect.

During the period of national independence (939-1404 A.D.) most of the Vietnamese people accepted Confucianism. Vietnamese writers were dominated by Confucianism and rarely veered from moralistic tales until 1925 when the author Hoang Ngoc Phach published the novel *To Tam* that marked a departure from Confucianist tradition.

In 1404 the Chinese reconquered the country and held it for 23 years. In 1427 the Vietnamese patriot Le Loi defeated the Chinese and, ruling under the name of Le Thai To, adopted a Confucian model of government which lasted for 360 years.

The influence of Confucianism on Vietnam was tenacious because it was rooted in the country's educational system until the 20th century. (Education consisted of a study of the Confucian classics and ethics.)

At first the schools taught only sons of royalty and other high officials, but in 1252 they were opened to students of varied backgrounds. By the beginning of the 15th century Confucian-type schools were operating in leading centers and education became the most cherished of ideals.

Confucian classics and ethics also were taught at elementary level in villages throughout the country.

Because of the scarcity of schools, the theater became a way to perpetuate Confucianism. The social rela-

tions of imperial Vietnam (emperor and subject, father and son, etc.) made the basis of stage plays. The five cardinal virtues of Confucianism (humanity, loyalty, civility, wisdom and justice) were promoted.

The Hat Boi, one of Vietnam's five major types of plays, is still influenced by Confucianism.

When Gia Long became emperor in 1802, centralized administration was strengthened. He and his successors zealously promoted Confucianism and their own image as Confucian father-figures of a harmonious and submissive Vietnamese national family.

In the 19th century, to be "educated" meant to be learned in the Confucian classics.

Schooled for centuries in Confucian principles, the rulers of Vietnam were unable to conceive of another kind of civilization and sought to isolate the country from alien religious ideas and from the modern world. In the 19th century this was no longer possible.

Under French rule, Confucianism declined. It encountered new ideas and forces, and long before the end of the colonial period it had lost its dominant position. The final blow to Confucian education was the French reform of civil service examinations which required training in the European educational system rather than Confucian learning.

Its basic precepts, however, remained deeply imbedded in the morals and values of the people.

#### **Confucianism and the Family**

Confucianism is still important as a traditional source of attitudes and values among the peasantry.

The Vietnamese villager still tends to feel that the family is more important than the individual, to respect learning and to believe that Man should live in harmony with his surroundings. Therefore, the peasant takes the "dao" or way of Confucius, a harmonious path between all extremes of conduct. (The Confucian dao is ethical, while the Taoist dao of Lao Tse is mystical.)

Confucianism beliefs also contribute to the politeness of the Vietnamese.

The Confucian doctrine which commands children to respect their father and mother and honor their memory, provides strength, stability and continuity to the large family group. It is a powerful guardian of morality because of the fear of dishonoring the memory of ancestors.

Rites for the ancestors continue as important ceremonies in Vietnam. Many Vietnamese homes have an altar dedicated to the family ancestors, decorated with candlesticks, incense bowls, flower trays and the tablet containing the names of ancestors who have died in the past five generations.

The ceremonies pay respect to the dead, preserve the family lineage, and care for the spirits of the departed who would otherwise wander homeless.

Offerings of food and symbolic votive papers are made by a male member of the family on whom falls responsibility for ancestor veneration on the anniversary of each ancestor's death and again after two years.

Ancestors are honored also on other special days including festivals, holidays, weddings and births.

Confucianists commemorate the anniversary of Confucius' birth on the 28th day of the ninth lunar month. The center of this birthday celebration is a temple (Temple of Souvenirs) dedicated to him in Saigon's Botanical Gardens.



# Buddhism

Buddhism is the third of the great religions which have contributed to the molding of Vietnamese culture and character over the centuries. Buddha was a contemporary of Confucius, and the religion he founded entered Vietnam from both India, Buddha's home, and China. Today it is perhaps the most visible of Vietnamese religious beliefs.

## Buddha

According to accounts of his life, Buddha was an Indian prince born about 563 B.C., in a small kingdom in northern India between Nepal and Sikkim. His given name was Siddhartha and his family name Guatama.

Six days after his birth an astrologer predicted that he would become a great leader. It was also noted that if the child saw signs of misery he would renounce royalty and become a monk.

His father, doting and anxious that Guatama should succeed him as king, screened his son from all unhappiness and surrounded him with luxury. Whenever Guatama went out, the king sent messengers to clear the streets of anything that would suggest other than youth, health and strength.

His early life also included a marriage, but when Guatama was 16 he married his second wife, Yasodhara, said to be the most beautiful in the kingdom, who bore him a son.

Then, the legends say, Guatama escaped from the palace one day and met four divine messengers. The first three were disguised as an old man, a sick man, and a dead man. They revealed misery to Buddha.

The fourth, disguised as a monk, caused him to decide to renounce his wealth and family to seek the way of deliverance for mankind.

Stealing away from the palace, Guatama shaved his head and put on the saffron robes of a monk and began years of wandering and austerity in search of the truth.

Finally he came to rest under a Bo-tree (also "Bodhi" tree) at Buddha Gaya where he fasted and meditated. The truth he sought, the way to relieve man's suffering, was revealed under this tree. Buddha called this truth the "Middle Way," a way of moderation between the luxury of his youth and the asceticism of his wanderings. Finding the truth, he became Buddha, The Enlightened one.

After his enlightenment, Buddha traveled and preached, attracting large gatherings and making converts from all classes of society. Yellow-robed, clean-shaven monks of his order wandered tirelessly, preaching the doctrine of liberation.

Buddha, according to some, was 80 years old when he died in 483 B. C., on the same day of the year that he was born and on which he attained enlightenment.

## Buddha's Teachings

*"Lead others, not by violence, but by righteousness and equity."*

The major teachings of Buddha are found in the Benares Sermon of Buddha which stressed the "Middle Way." That this "Middle Way" might be realized by humanity, Buddha proclaimed what are now known as the Four Noble Truths:

1. Existence (life) is a succession of suffering, or, to exist is to suffer;
2. Suffering is caused and created by desires or cravings; the ignorance of true reality allows ambition, anger, illusion, to continue to cause an endless cycle of existence;
3. The extinguishing of suffering can be achieved only by the elimination of desire;
4. The elimination of desire or craving can be achieved only through the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Noble Eightfold Path by which the Buddhist must strive to perfect himself consists of:

1. Right views
2. Right aspirations
3. Right speech
4. Right behavior
5. Right living
6. Right effort
7. Right thoughts
8. Right concentration

Buddha gave five Commandments or Prohibitions:

1. Do not kill;
2. Do not steal;
3. Do not be unchaste;
4. Do not lie;
5. Do not drink alcohol.

## Karma and the Wheel of Existence

None of Buddha's teaching is of great significance than the doctrine of Karma. The wheel, one of the earliest Buddhist symbols, stands for the unending cycle of existence through which life goes on by birth and rebirth.

According to the doctrine of Karma the sum total of a person's good or bad actions, comprising thoughts, words and deeds, determines his specific destiny in the next rebirth in the unending cycle of life.

As translated from **The Gospel of Buddha** by Paul Carus, Buddha taught that "All beings have karma as their portion: they are heirs of their karma; they are sprung from their karma; their karma is their kinsman; their karma is their refuge; karma allots beings to meanness or to greatness."

While Hinduism holds a similar belief in reincarnation, the wheel of existence and karma, Buddhism



Altar of famed Xa Loi pagoda in Saigon points up splendor and vastness of larger Buddhist places of worship.

differs in that Buddha taught that there is no self, therefore, no actual transmigration of the soul or continuity of the individual.

Again from **The Gospel of Buddha**, Buddha said, "Therefore abandon all thought of self. But since there are deeds and since deeds continue, be careful with your deeds."

The individual is likened to the waves of the sea, separate, but part of the whole sea to which they return without identity. Men remerge with the whole of being or into the total universe.

In fact Buddhists technically prefer the term "demise" to death as they assert there is no death as life is not confined to one's body, but that the life force experiences a series of rebirth. In popular Buddhism, the adherent tends to think of himself as a candidate for rebirth.

As a man determines his Karma by his actions, he has made himself. This force, Karma, is held to be the motive power for the round of rebirths and deaths endured until one has freed himself from its effects and escapes from the Wheel of Existence.

#### Nirvana

The state to which the Buddhist aspires is Nirvana. It is a state of being freed from the cycle of rebirth

or the Wheel of Existence. It is the final release from Karma and can be achieved only by long, laborious effort, self-denial, good deeds, thoughts, and purification through successive lives.

An exact definition of Nirvana seems unobtainable since Buddha refrained from describing this state. He called it the summit of existence, the enlightenment of mind and heart, the city of peace, the lake of ambrosia and peace, perfect, eternal and absolute.

It is the state in which Buddha's followers believe him to be now as a result of the Enlightenment which he achieved.

It was the lack of a clear definition of Nirvana that caused the Great Buddhist schism into two main sects. (These two divisions, Mahayana and Theravada or Hinayana, are discussed later.)

#### Buddhism After Buddha

The teachings of Buddha are found in more than 10,000 ancient manuscripts written after his death by his disciples. Buddha had taught no divine object of worship.

At first Buddhists made no images but used symbols to remember him. A Bo-tree recalled his enlightenment. A wheel became a reminder of the law and a suggestion of eternal truth. His tireless journeys were recalled by his foot prints carved in stone.

Symbols, relics, sacred writings and prayers were placed in dome-shaped structures called stupas and in temples and shrines as objects of veneration. As time passed the faithful began to worship Buddha images in elaborate temples.

As Buddhism spread it underwent many changes. Its speculative nature attracted scholars while its virtues and ceremonial observances appealed to the common people.

In the countries where Buddhism was carried by missionaries it adapted itself to the beliefs and forms of worship that were already there and added festivities of its own.

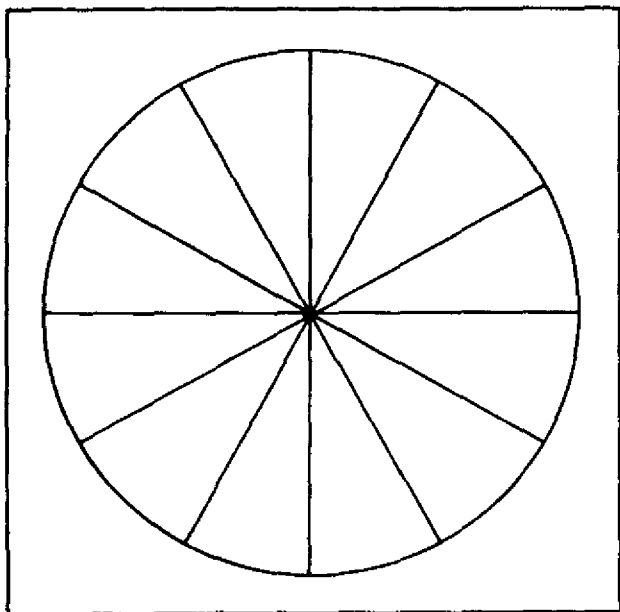
### Major Buddhist Divisions

By the second century A.D., Buddhism had divided into two major branches: Theravada (the lesser vehicle or the teaching of the elders) also called Hinayana, and Mahayana (the greater vehicle). The two branches do not necessarily conflict but they emphasize different things.

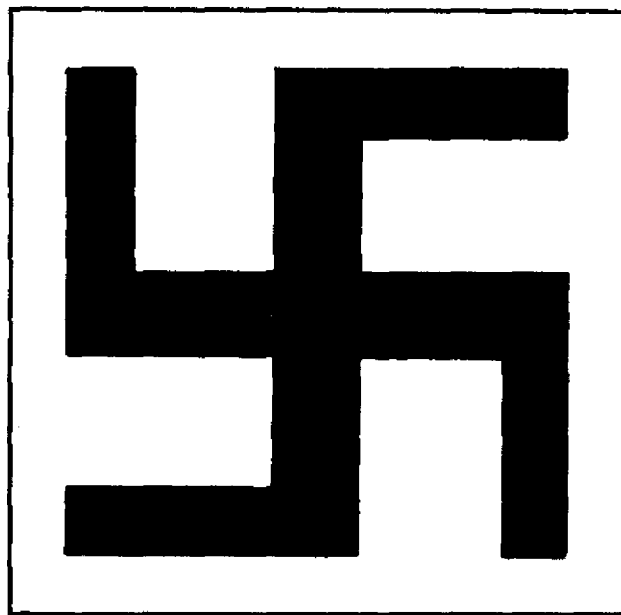
Followers of Theravada Buddhism regard Guatama as the only Buddha and believe that only a select few will reach Nirvana. Every man following this branch must spend several months in the priesthood.

This is a minor division of Buddhism in Vietnam, found principally in the southern Delta provinces such as Ba Xuyen and An Giang where there are groups of ethnic Cambodians. Their number is estimated at 500,000 or more.

The "greater vehicle" of Mahayana theology teaches that everyone can strive toward a better world. The followers regard Buddha as only one of many Buddhas



"Wheel of Life" is oldest Buddhist symbol. Buddha said its spokes are rules of pure conduct; justice is uniformity of their length. Wisdom is the rim; modesty and thoughtfulness are the hub, in which the immovable axle of truth is fixed.



To Buddhists this symbol is "Chu Van," the mark of Enlightenment. It is found on medals, decorating pagodas, and on breasts of Buddha statues.

and believe that, theoretically, any person may become a Buddha—if not in this life, then in a future life—but those who attain Buddhahood are rare.

A pantheon of superhuman beings, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, are recognized and venerated in Mahayana pagodas. A Bodhisattva is a saint who strives for perfection, or a person who relinquishes his own chance to enter Nirvana in order to help others achieve salvation.

The Greater Vehicle emphasizes worship before the image of Buddha in temples rather than a retired life of devotion. Men are not required to spend time as a priest in Mahayana. There are 16 denominations or sects of Buddhism in Vietnam, most of which are Mahayana.

The Thien (Zen), a school of Mahayana Buddhism, is a major school in Vietnam. Thien has 12,000 monks and 4,000 temples. It is also a key factor in other countries influenced by Chinese civilization such as China, Tibet, Korea, Japan and Taiwan.

Theravada Buddhism predominates in countries along the Indian Ocean including Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, and Laos.

### Buddhism In Vietnam

Buddhism was introduced into Vietnam in the second century A.D., and was spread for the next four centuries by Chinese and Indian monks. This was the first of three stages in the spread of Buddhism in Vietnam.

Buddhism reached its greatest heights in Vietnam in the second stage which ran roughly from the seventh to the 14th centuries. With expulsion of the Chinese in 939, Confucian scholars with their Chinese education were exiled temporarily from political life and Buddhism received official support.

A second reason for its growth was that pagodas also served as repositories of culture.

Between 1010 and 1214 the Ly dynasty made Buddhism a state religion. Monks were used as advisers in all spheres of public life, a Buddhist hierarchy established, and many temples and pagodas built. This was the high-water mark for official support of Buddhism.

By the close of the eleventh century, Buddhism had planted its roots so deeply in Vietnamese culture that it was no longer considered an imported religion.

It had been the court religion; now it had filtered down to the villages and hamlets. Here mixed with Confucianism and Taoism it had become an indigenous part of the popular beliefs of the people.

The decline of Buddhism began with this adulteration of the pure religion and progressed with the lessening of official support. In the 15th century the rulers again favored Confucianism which continued as the more influential religion in public life until the present century.

The admixture of the three religions, Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, continued and formed the religion of many Vietnamese. Rites and practices of animism also influenced popular beliefs.

A revival of the purer forms of Buddhism and the establishment of an Association of Buddhist Studies in Saigon in 1931 were halted by World War II. Centers of Buddhist revival were opened also in Hanoi and Hue, where the movement became strongest.

Since 1948, although with temporary setbacks, Vietnamese Buddhist groups have strengthened their organizations, developed lay and youth activities, worked toward unifying the various branches and sects, and joined the World Buddhist Organization.

#### Effects On Vietnamese Life

Buddhism today retains a deep influence on the mass of the people and its effects go far beyond religion, touching on behavior, the arts, and craft forms.

Buddhism presented to Vietnam a new look at the universe, the individual and life. It had a particularly strong effect on morals and behavior.

All the arts show the Buddhist influence. The creation of Buddha's image affected the arts of the entire Far East, for giving human characteristics to Buddha's image and to those of the Bodhisattvas opened up a whole new field in the arts.

Episodes from the life and teachings of Buddha as well as the effects of good and evil deeds have been the subjects for paintings, engravings and murals.

Sculpture, painting and architecture often have been inspired by two key virtues of Buddhism; purity and compassion.

Buddhism also served as a vehicle for bringing Indian and Chinese art to Vietnam, and influenced designs in lacquer work, weaving, embroidery, jewelry and metal work.

Most of the prose and poetry of the first independent national dynasty was written by Buddhist monks who exchanged their verse with the great poets of China.

The spiritual warmth and brilliance which drew thousands of followers to Buddha during his life and has drawn millions since, is illustrated in the literature based on his teachings and parables. One of the best known

has become a folk tale all over the world: "What Is An Elephant?"

Nguyen Du's famous poem, "Kim Van Kieu," based on the teachings of Buddha, has been popular for more than a century. Vietnamese children memorize long passages from its 3,254 verses. One of the main factors that made it popular is its treatment of Karma.

The effect of Buddhism on Vietnamese life was summed up in **Buddhism in Vietnam** by Chanh-Tri and Mai Tho-Truyen:

"In Vietnam, Buddhist influence is not limited to the realm of art, letters and philosophy. It inspires the theater, serves as a guide for certain good customs, inspires stories and legends, provides suggestions for popular songs and proverbs."

In Vietnam the fourth day of the 15th lunar month, which normally comes in April or May, is observed as Buddha's birthday. It is a national holiday. The same day is commonly observed as the date of his death and of his enlightenment, although the eighth day of the 12th month is officially observed as the date of his enlightenment.

The first and 15th days of each lunar month are Buddhist holy days.

#### Terms, Symbols and Sacred Objects

The Three Jewels/Three Gems form the object of devotion in which every follower of Buddha puts his whole hope. They are Buddha, the Dharma or teachings of Buddha, and the Sangha or order of Buddhist monks.

The Sangha is composed of the monks or nuns and is basically supported by the laity, mainly through gifts which earn merit for the giver. Their shaven heads and yellow, gray or brown robes mark their renunciation of worldly pleasures. While Mahayana monks may wear saffron robes, Theravada monks always do.

Though normally vegetarians, monks may eat meat on occasion. They live a life of utmost simplicity, own almost no personal property.

Personal items allowed may vary, but in general consist of one undergarment, two robes, a belt, an alms bowl, a small knife or razor, a needle and a water strainer. They are provided food by the laity.

The monks perform many services and functions for the faithful. They participate in and lead religious observances and festivals. They may be invited to weddings although they do not officiate. At funerals they lead the rites in the home and at cremation or burial, and again at intervals after burial and on the first anniversary of death. Some have been commissioned as chaplains in the Vietnamese Armed Forces.

The monks care for temples and pagodas, teach religion. Some assist in charitable work and other health and welfare projects. The former preach in the pagodas on the 1st and 15th of each lunar month.

Particularly in rural areas, the monk may be the best educated person in the community and serve as an adviser in community affairs and as a teacher. More important to Buddhists, the monks are examples of the Middle Way of Life in the travel to Nirvana.

Nuns have been part of the Sangha since the Buddha established the role of nuns in his lifetime. Nuns observe similar but stricter rules than bonzes, are usually affiliated with pagodas though living in separate establishments.

**Pagodas, shrines, temples:** There are distinctions in purpose and use between these three but the untrained observer will not normally be able to distinguish among them. However, all are sacred. Unless permission is granted to leave shoes on, they should be removed before entering.

The pagoda (chua) is usually the largest, best constructed and most ornate building in Vietnamese villages. Even in cities, its appearance sets it apart.

The pagodas of Vietnam are normally constructed in the highly decorated Chinese style. The dragon, the phoenix and other legendary figures are interwoven with Buddhist symbols such as the Wheel of Life and the Chu Van (swastika).

Pagodas are used for services but even more for private devotions. At the front of the main room before a statue of Buddha is an altar usually containing flowers, offerings of fruits, candle sticks, and incense.

The pagoda area may include rooms for instruction and quarters for the monks.

The Wheel of Life, earliest of Buddhist symbols, is a circle with eight or 12 divisions (spokes). The circle denotes the Buddhist concept of the endless cycle of existence. Eight spokes signify the Noble Eightfold Path and 12 spokes denote either the 12 principles of Buddhism or the 12-year calendar within an endless cycle of time. The symbol of Buddhist chaplains in the Vietnamese Armed Forces is the 12-spoke Wheel of Life held by the Hand of Mercy.

The Chu Van (swastika to most Westerners) is the symbol of Enlightenment, the achievement of Nirvana. It is often found on medals, decorating pagodas, or on the chests of Buddha statues as Buddhists believe it will appear on the chests of the Enlightened.

Buddha statues are normally the central figure in the pagoda and wherever found are held in sacred esteem.

Gongs or drums are used in pagodas and homes for three basic purposes: to announce the time of a service or meeting, to mark the different parts of a ceremony, and to set the tempo for chanting as an aid to one's meditation.

The drum of the pagoda is usually located on the

porch and is used to alert the community that a service is beginning or ending.

Flowers are widely used for devotions in Vietnam on family altars, graves, in the pagoda, or for presentations when calling on bonzes or older relatives. In the temple, flowers symbolize the shortness of life and the constant change inherent in existence.

Incense is symbolic of self-purification and self-dedication and is offered in memory of Buddha and as a form of meditation. When joss sticks are burned, there are usually three to symbolize the Three Gems.

Lights, candles or lamps, symbolize Buddha's teachings which give light to the mind and drive away ignorance, replacing it with Enlightenment.

Food and water are placed before the altars of Buddha and symbolize that the best is first shared with him. As only the essence of food is essential for worship, the items are later retrieved and used.

Merit bowls, often incorrectly called "begging bowls" by Westerners, are the means by which the monks receive their daily food. The receiving of food symbolizes the monk's vow of poverty and the giving is a means of gaining merit for the giver.

The lotus blossom is a much-used Buddhist decoration. Buddha often used the lotus as an example, pointing out that though it grew in the water and mire, the beautiful flower stood above the impurities untouched. The bud is a popular offering to monks and pagodas. The seed may be eaten either green or dry. Roots are also eaten in salads, soup, or candied as dessert.

Buddhist beads consist of a string of 108 beads, each symbolizing one of the desires or cravings which must be overcome. The beads are used in meditation.

The Buddhist flag is composed of six vertical stripes of equal width. The first five, from left to right, are blue, yellow, red, white and pink or light orange. The sixth stripe is composed of five horizontal stripes of equal width in the same colors and order from bottom to top.

Each color signifies a different Buddhist virtue, but there is no consensus on which color represents which virtue. (The flag was designed in Ceylon in the 1880s by an American ex-Army officer, a Civil War veteran.)

Lustral water, or holy water, is water which has been poured over a Buddha statue under the proper conditions to gain some of the efficaciousness of the Buddha's virtues. It may be poured over the hands of a corpse at funerals or the hands of a bridal couple or sprinkled about a newly-built house. It should be treated in the same manner as the holy water of Catholic practice.

## The Hoa Hao

The Hoa Hao (pronounced wah how) is generally accepted as a Buddhist religion. Founded in Vietnam in 1939, it is a reform development of Theravada Buddhism which stresses simplifying doctrine and practice.

Found mainly in the Delta where it began, the Hoa Hao has a history of political and military as well as

religious activity.

### History

The Hoa Hao was founded by Huyen Phu So, who was born in 1919 at Hoa Hao Village, Chau Doc Province. At 20, after a life of weakness and infirmity, he was



Hoa Hao altar bears portrait of religion's founder, Huyen Phu So.

miraculously healed and began to proclaim his doctrines of Buddhist reform, giving them the name of his native village.

So's apparent power of healing, of prophecy (he foretold defeat of French in World War II, coming of Japanese and later of Americans), and his zeal and eloquence quickly gained him a large following. In time So was being called Phat Song, the Living Buddha.

Considering his teaching anti-French, the French exiled him to My Tho and Cai Be where he gained more converts. The French then placed him in a mental institution in Cholon, where So converted the psychiatrist in charge.

Declared sane and released, So was next exiled to Bac Lieu Province and then in desperation sent to Laos.

After the Japanese came, they insisted on his return in late 1942. With the Japanese defeat, So led the Hoa Hao into the National United Front, a group of nationalist organizations seeking Vietnamese independence. However So would not accept Viet Minh leadership and the break led to open conflict between the Hoa Hao and the communists.

In April 1947 the Viet Minh ambushed and executed So in Long Xuyen, a fact still not discussed or accepted by all Hoa Hao followers, some of whom believe So is still alive. All believe that he will return.

Ever since, the Hoa Hao have been joined in implacable opposition to the Viet Cong. However, on other issues the sect divided and has not had cohesive leadership.

Most of the Hoa Hao also opposed the Diem government, maintaining their own military forces (used against the Japanese, French and Viet Minh) up until reconciliation with the government in 1963.

Hoa Hao adherents are estimated at between a half-million and a million, although they claim two million. They are concentrated in An Giang and Chau Doc Provinces and are also influential in the provinces of Ba Xuyen, Bac Lieu, Chuong Thien, Kien Giang, Kien Phong, Phong Dinh and Ving Long.

Though the sect is united now only on religion, its background of military and political involvement growing out of a time of war and struggle make it still a faction of some strength.

### Hoa Hao Beliefs

The appeal of Hoa Haoism is attributed to its simplicity and lessened demands on the peasants. The founder advocated a return to basic Buddhist precepts, the absence of elaborate temples, statues, monks and other outward forms of Buddhism. He stressed individual worship as the means of attaining a richer spiritual experience and working toward salvation.

The faithful are free to practice their religion whenever and wherever they please.

The four major precepts So taught are:

- Honor parents
- Love country
- Respect Buddhism and its teachings
- Love fellow men

So stressed four virtues which prescribe that marriage partners be faithful to each other, that children obey parents, and that officials be just, honest and faithful in behalf of their people even as parents care for their children.

Members of the Hoa Hao recite four prayers a day, the first to Buddha, the second to the "Reign of the Enlightened King," the third to living and dead parents and relatives, the fourth to the "mass of small people to whom I wish to have the will to improve themselves, to be charitable, and to liberate themselves from the shackles of ignorance."

These prayers are said before a small, simple altar in home or temple. The altar is covered with a maroon cloth as a symbol of universal understanding, because these Vietnamese accept maroon as the all-embracing color. Four magical Chinese characters, "Bao Son Ky Huong" (a scent from a strange mountain), adorn the cloth.

The only offerings sanctioned by the Hoa Hao are water (preferably rainwater) as a symbol of cleanliness, flowers as a sign of purity, and small offerings of incense.

The Hoa Hao have permitted some restricted forms of Confucianism and Animism such as the incense which is to chase away evil spirits, and prayers and offerings to Vietnamese national heroes and to personal ancestors.

Hoa Hao are forbidden to drink alcohol, to smoke opium, or to kill either buffalo or oxen for food. The

ban on killing oxen and buffalo does not preclude eating beef when it is offered by a host. However, Hoa Hao just not eat either meat or greasy food on the first, 14th, 15th, or 30th days of the lunar month as these are days of abstinence.

The Hoa Hao celebrate the anniversary date of their founding on the 18th day of the fifth lunar month.

gathering to listen to sermons and speeches.

The major pagoda is located in Hoa Hao Village, undoubtedly the center of the religious faith.

The Hoa Hao flag is rectangular in shape and solid maroon as the Hoa Hao believe that maroon is the combination of all colors and thus signifies unity of all people.

## Cao Dai

The Cao Dai (pronounced cow die) like the Hoa Hao is a distinct religion which originated in Vietnam and has been active politically and militarily; unlike Hoa Hao, however, the Cao Dai are not accepted by the Buddhists as Buddhists.

Cao Daism was organized in 1919 as an indigenous Vietnamese religion composed of "spiritism" and a ouija-board device called *corbeille a bec* (beaked bag), Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity. It has a Roman Catholic-type church organization.

It was formed in an attempt to create a universally acceptable religion in an area of the world where an intermingling of religious beliefs might be found in the same person.

### Basis of Cao Daism

The Cao Dai believe that there have been three major revelations of divinity to mankind.

The First Revelation was given to several missionary saints including a Buddhist, a Taoist, an ancestor worshipper and Moses. The Second Revelation came to Lao Tse, Confucius, Ca Kyamuni (for Buddhism), Jesus and Mohammed.

The Third Revelation was given by God to the Cao Dai founder Ngo Van Chieu on Phu Quoc Island in 1919. The name Cao Dai means the high, tower-shaped throne of the Supreme Emperor (God).

### Major Doctrines of Cao Dai

The major doctrines of the Cao Dai are:



Juge globe at Cao Dai's Tay Ninh Temple symbolizes universe, with all-seeing divinity represented by painted-on human eye.

● That Cao Daism is the Third Revelation of divinity to all men and supersedes or corrects previous teachings.

● Cao Daism worships the Absolute Supreme God who is eternal without beginning or end, who is the Creator of all, Supreme Father of all, and unique Master who created and creates all angels, buddhas and saints.

● Cao Daists believe in the existence of three distinct categories of invisible beings:

The highest deities composed of buddhas, saints, and angels; the medium beings which include sanctified spirits; the lower beings which include both phantoms and devils.

This belief includes the concept that all three orders must pass through human existence in order to help humanity and normally move from the lowest toward the higher forms. Of all living creatures, only man can become a devil or an angel because he has a special soul.

● Cao Daists believe that the human soul may go up or down the ladder of existence, and that man by his will and actions determines the direction.

● The ultimate goal of Cao Daism is the deliverance of man from the endless cycle of existence. Man possesses an immortal soul which must obtain release from the cycle for complete victory.

● The worship of ancestors is a means of communication between the visible and invisible worlds, between the living and the dead, and is a means of expressing love and gratitude to ancestors.

● Cao Dai ethical concepts teach equality and brotherhood of all races, the love of justice, the Buddhist law of Karma, Buddha's Five Commandments and Eightfold Path, and the Confucian Doctrine of the Mean.

● Cao Daism recognizes a pantheon of saints and deities which include Joan of Arc, Sun Yat Sen and Victor Hugo.

● Last, but not least, Cao Daists believe that divinity speaks to man through spiritual mediums using the *corbeille a bec*.

When this beaked bag is held by two members of the Legislative Body of the Cao Dai over a board which holds the alphabet, the divinity causes his spirit to move the bag to spell out the divine communication. Such messages must be revealed at the Tay Ninh Temple.

### Organization

The Cao Dai church has three major administrative sections, executive, legislative, and charity.

The Executive Body (Cuu Trung Dai) runs the temporal affairs of the church. The titular head, the Pope, is reputed to be the spirit of a Chinese poet. The position of Interim Pope (living head of the church) has been empty since 1934 due to an inability to agree on a successor.

Other members of the executive are cardinals, archbishops, bishops, monks, nuns and some laity.

The Legislative Body (Hiep Thien Dai) is a 15-man college of spiritual mediums who regulate the use of the beaked bag.

The Charity Body (Co Quan Phuoc Thien) has the duty of caring for the sick and aiding the needy, orphans, handicapped and aged.

Within the hierarchy of Cao Daism are three major branches: The Confucian group who wear red robes as a symbol of authority; the Buddhist group who wear yellow as the symbol of virtue and love; and the Taoists who wear blue, the color of peace. These colors are normally worn on special occasions; otherwise the clergy wear white and black robes.

Ordinary clergy may marry. All clergy are required to be vegetarians.

### Holy City of Tay Ninh

There are several sects of Cao Daists with centers throughout Vietnam but the center of the faith is at Tay Ninh City in the Tay Ninh Temple. It is built to the same pattern as other Cao Dai temples but in a more grandiose style. It sits in a large, well-ordered compound which includes a school, a hospital, an orphanage, a home for the aged and a residence for nuns.

The temple has nine floor levels, rising from the door to the altar, which represent the nine levels of spiritual ascension possible.

The main altar is a huge globe symbolizing the universe. On the globe is painted a human eye which symbolizes the all-seeing eye of divinity. The eye, by which all Cao Dai altars can be recognized, is in other uses set within a triangle. (Americans will recognize it as the same eye and triangle as that on the back of our one-dollar bills.)

Cao Dai laity must worship at least once a day in home or temple at one of four set times: 0600, 1200, 1800 or 2400 hours.

Special occasions for services include 8 January, the anniversary of the First Cao Dai Revelation, and 15 August, which honors the Holy Mother of the founder.

Cao Dai use tea, flowers, and alcohol as offerings, representing the three elements of human beings; intelligence, spirit, and energy.

Five joss sticks are used in worship to represent the five levels of initiation; purity, meditation, wisdom, superior knowledge, and freedom from Karma.

The Cao Dai flag has three horizontal bars, red, blue and yellow (from the top) representing the same attributes as the robes of the clergy.

### Influence in Vietnam

The Cao Dai claim about two million members in the Republic of Vietnam, with the largest numbers concentrated west and south of Saigon. Other estimates put the number at about a million. In the disorganized times during and after World War II they acted in political and military roles, often largely controlling some provinces.

In general the Cao Dai have been anti-communist. They are still a major factor in Vietnam, particularly in areas where they form the major part of the population.



# Christianity

Christianity has a longer history in Vietnam than most Americans might suppose, dating back to the early 16th century when the first Roman Catholic priest landed in what is now South Vietnam.

Today Christianity must be considered one of the major religions, claiming approximately 11 per cent of the population of the Republic of Vietnam.

The comparatively high educational level of many of Vietnam's Catholics tends to place them in positions of influence.

## Roman Catholicism

Roman Catholics form the largest Christian group in Vietnam. The religion was brought to Vietnam during the 16th century and expanded during the 17th century. Alexandre de Rhodes, S.J., who was in Vietnam from 1624-1645 and who developed the present Vietnamese alphabet, headed one of the more prominent missions.

Catholicism persisted despite recurrent persecutions until religious freedom for all Christians was guaranteed by treaties with the French regime late in the 19th century.

Spokesmen for the church point out that cultural patterns not in conflict with church theology may be practiced. Thus, ancestor veneration is practiced in nearly all Vietnamese Roman Catholic homes.

Today the Roman Catholic Church counts 10.5 per cent of all South Vietnamese as members. This includes 650,000 Catholics who migrated from North Vietnam after the Geneva Accords of 1954.

There are two Archdioceses and 13 Dioceses in South

Vietnam. The Archbishops, at Saigon and Hue, and the 13 Bishops all are Vietnamese but one—a French Bishop at Kontum. Heavy concentrations of Catholics are in urban areas of Saigon, Nha Trang, Hue, Qui Nhon, Dalat and Kontum. The Vietnamese Armed Forces have had priests serving as chaplains since 1951.

## Protestantism

Protestantism was introduced at Da Nang in 1911 by a Canadian missionary, Dr. R. A. Jaffray, under the auspices of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. This international organization has more than 100 missionaries in Vietnam and has been largely responsible for the growth of Protestantism here.

Today missionaries from this organization are found throughout the Republic of Vietnam; they ceased their work in North Vietnam after the 1954 Geneva Accords.

One important outgrowth of this missionary work was the establishment of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam which has 345 churches and approximately 150,000 adherents. The church and the Christian and Missionary Alliance carry on extensive health, education and welfare work. All Vietnamese protestant chaplains are pastors in the Evangelical Church of Vietnam.

As more missionaries came, most from Canada and the United States, Protestantism spread to Hanoi, Saigon and Dalat.

In more recent years, other Protestant groups have begun work in Vietnam. While their outreach has been less extensive, their impact has been significant in both religious and welfare activities.

# Religion In Everyday Life

Listed below are miscellaneous religious practices, beliefs and traditions which for reasons of clarity were omitted from the sections on particular religions. Many of these are so blended with Vietnamese daily life that they are not easily attributable to any one religious belief.

\* \* \* \* \*

The "lay" (pronounced "lie") is a hand sign used both as a form of greeting and as the highest gesture of respect. In making this sign the hands are placed palms together, fingers pointing upward, in front of the chest. When showing respect to clergy or when worshipping, the hands are raised in front of the face.

Customarily, the lay is performed three times after

lighting joss sticks in front of a pagoda. (Unless specifically invited to do so, it is not proper for those who are not members of the faith to light joss sticks.)

Funerals vary depending on locality, ethnic groups, religious beliefs and wealth and position.

Normally the chief mourner leads the funeral procession, followed by the hearse, religious objects, pictures of the deceased, women mourners in white, a band, and other mourners. Jokes about sickness and death should be avoided and the dead should be treated with the same respect that you would show in our society.

Graves in Vietnam vary from those in regular cemeteries to circular piles of dirt which may dot the countryside in paddies and fields.

Wherever found, graves should be respected and extra trouble taken not to desecrate them. The Viet-



Common Vietnamese gesture of worship, the "lay" (pronounced "lie") is performed by woman at left with joss sticks in clasped hands.

nameless believe that desecration of a grave angers the spirits, causing an attack on the living.

The communal house (dinh), along with the pagoda and the market, is one of the places of greatest importance in any Vietnamese community.

The communal house is first of all a place to worship the protective genii of the village.

Secondly, it is the place to receive the king or, in more modern terms, to receive the representative of the government, the province chief or other officials; and a meeting place for the notables of the village.

Lastly, the communal house is a place for keeping memorial tablets to village dead who died without descendants to carry out their ancestor worship.

Over the door to a communal house will be found Chinese characters which mean "Long Life to the King," indicative of its purpose as a place to receive the king.

Spirit houses, little shelters like birdhouses ranging from simple to elaborate, are erected for the happiness of the spirits. They often contain candles and joss sticks. They reflect the belief in ancestor veneration and are vitally important to those who erect them.

Americans and Vietnamese see time differently.

For Americans, time is linear with a beginning, an end, and measured segments. For the Vietnamese, time is circular, unending and endlessly repeating the 12-year cycle. They have developed patience and the hope that Karma will improve their lot in their next existence.

The role of the family is particularly important in Vietnam, more so than that of the individual or society as a whole. Vietnamese concepts of family have been affected by Buddhism, ancestor veneration and Confucianism.

Each individual is a part of the family, a link to yesterday and tomorrow. The value placed on the family encourages large families, respect for the aged and conformity to what is best for the family.

Votive Papers, representing gold, silver, clothing and other common objects, are burned to provide for the needs of ancestors or other persons being venerated.

In ancient custom, not only in Asia but also in other lands, the actual objects (sometimes including servants) were buried with the dead. The use of votive papers evolved as a more humane and less expensive way of caring for the spirits.

## VIETNAMESE SYSTEMS OF THOUGHT AND CONDUCT

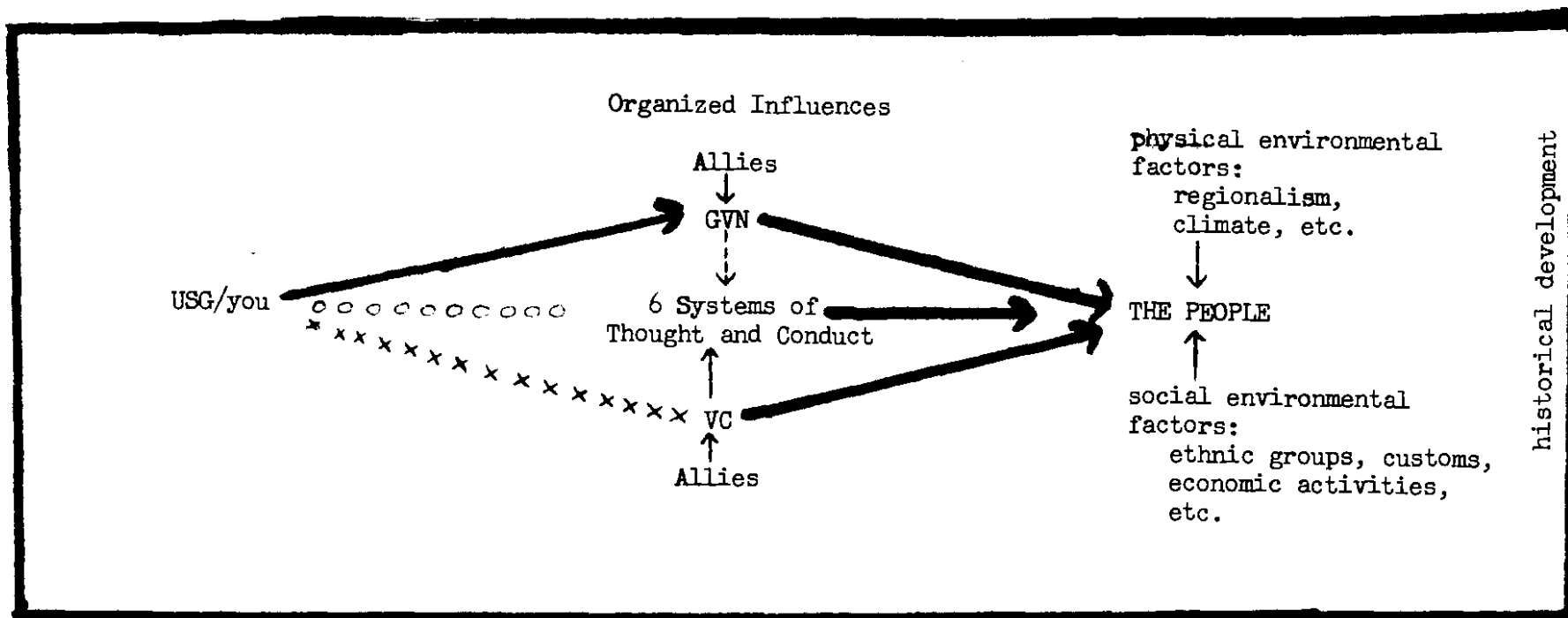
1. Animism
2. Taoism
3. Confucianism
4. Buddhism
5. Catholicism
6. Cao Daism

FSI/VTC  
Richard A. Gard  
(Rev. August 1969)



SITUATION

OPPORTUNITY



"Another spirit of nature is the Goddess of the Five Elements--metal, wood, fire, water and earth--who likes to start fires to show her power. In addition, there are spirits of mountains, rivers, stars, sun and moon, clouds, rain, wind, thunder, graves and tombs. Coastal dwellers worship the whale as their special protector; in a similar manner forest dwellers venerate the tiger."\*

b. Basic practices:

(Are pragmatic according to established criteria and experiences.)

"Attaining the favor of good spirits and avoiding the malice of evil ones is a continuing preoccupation in Vietnamese life, characteristic of group as well as individual behavior. A multiplicity of local and regional cults exists, each devoted to the veneration of a protective deity or collection of deities associated with the well-being of a particular community. An important cult is that of founders of the crafts.

"Artisans of all types honor the so-called patron saint of their craft, who may be either the originator of the art or the first person to teach it to the people of a particular village or area. Guardian spirits preside over various occupations. Boat builders, for example, make offerings to their local guardian spirit in the ceremonies of the 'Squaring of the Wood,' when the first blow of the ax is struck; 'The Joining of the Mortises,' when the three pieces of the keel are joined; and 'The Placing of the Beam,' when the supports for the main mast are put in place.

"Villages, especially those in Central Viet-Nam, almost always have their own special deity, known as the Guardian Spirit of the Village, whose veneration is a focal point of community religious activity. To the villagers, the Guardian Spirit symbolizes their cultural uniqueness as well as their future hopes. He is a majestic figure of power, a spiritual bond that makes the village a cohesive unit. In most instances the Guardian Spirit was originally named centuries ago by the emperor. The choice usually fell on someone who in his lifetime had been a highly respected local dignitary, but some of the spirits worshiped in the communal temple (Dinh) of particular villages are legendary figures; others are celebrated national heroes or heroines, village fathers, children who died at a young age or victims of violence.

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\*U.S., Department of the Army, Area Handbook for South Vietnam (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, April 1967) (DA Pamphlet No. 550-55), Chapter 11. Religion, section on "The Faiths," p. 179.

"The imperial document naming the Guardian Spirit is deposited in the inner sanctuary of the communal temple on the principal altar of the temple, dedicated to the Guardian Spirit. Images or tablets of the spirit, along with ritual articles, also are placed here. This room is usually closed to the public. Standing outside are altars dedicated to other spirits (such as the god of the soil), also revered by the whole community."\*

"... most Vietnamese, whatever their professed religion, place of residence, type of education or level of sophistication, are influenced at one time or another, by magic, fortunetelling and geomancy (the discovery of hidden knowledge through interpretation of figures or lines). Diviners and other specialists in the occult are in popular demand, diagnosing supernatural causes of illness, establishing lucky dates for personal undertakings, or predicting the future. They are most frequently resorted to by villagers and the urban poor.

"Many Vietnamese believe that individual destiny is guided by a particular star, and that the positioning of this star in the heavens on his birth date predisposes him to good or ill fortune at certain times. By consulting his horoscope, he can make the most of auspicious periods and avoid disaster during inauspicious periods. Traditionally, it was most unusual for any couple to marry without consulting an astrologer, who not only determined whether the potential partners were suitably matched on the basis of their individual horoscopes but fixed the date of the ceremony.

"Before building a house, some Vietnamese employ a geomancer to choose the site, hoping to avoid disturbing any potentially vengeful spirits. Selecting the proper site for family tombs is equally important."\*\*

#### Program rapport prospects:

Consult a cooperative astrologer, fortune-teller, geomancer, or other specialist-practitioner in animism and popular cults in your area as to:

(1) The most appropriate time at which to begin your program or activities.

(2) The most suitable site/place to locate your program (facilities, equipment, etc., or construction) in the community.

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\*Ibid, pp. 178-179.

\*\*Ibid, section on "Practices," pp. 188-189.

# VIETNAMESE SYSTEMS OF THOUGHT AND CONDUCT

## A. Importance: Society in South Viet-Nam has

1. Military organization (VC would revise)
2. Political organization (VC would revise)
3. Economic organization (VC would revise)
4. Social organization (VC would revise)
5. Instrumental organizations: Systems of thought and conduct (VC would replace)

## B. Definition:

VIETNAMESE ethnic groups:	SYSTEMS	OF THOUGHT	AND	CONDUCT
		interrelated		
Vietnamese	"isms"*	(principle)		(practice)
Cambodians				
Chinese	exposition	of what to think	+	what to do=what to be
Montagnards	method	of how to think	+	how to do=how to be
others				

\*(triet-ly/hoc=philosophy and ton-giao=religion are late 19th century Westernized concepts)

## C. Scope

## D. Historical Development

		BC-AD	1969
SPECTRUM (INTERRELATED)	interrelated (cf. Dinh)		
	spectrum		
	1. Animism (by Vn, Cam, Chi, Mon, others)		
	folk beliefs		
	popular cults		
	"natural" science/art		
national aims & organization	2. Taoism (Dao-giao by Vn, Chi)		waning
	philosophical views		
	religious practices		
	"natural" science/art		
	3. Confucianism (Khong-giao by Vn, Chi)		waning
	political principles		
	social ethics		
	family institution		
	4. Buddhism (Phat-giao by Vn, Chi, Cam)		
	Cambodian Theravada Groups		
	Chinese Mahayana groups		
	Vietnamese Theravada groups		
	Vietnamese Mahayana groups		
	Vietnamese Hoa Hao		
	other groups		
	5. Catholicism (Cong-giao by Vn)		
	Church hierarchy		
	6. Cao Daism (Dai-dao Tam-ky Pho-do by Vn)		
	several factions		

# 1. Animism: Folk Beliefs, Popular Cults, "Natural" Science/Art

(A spectrum in itself and the popularized end of Vietnamese systems' spectrum) Various ethnic-derived forms, both elementary and sophisticated: Vietnamese, Montagnard, Cambodian, Chinese, and others. Still influential in varying degrees in Montagnard tribal life and in Vietnamese Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Cao Daism.

Spiritually based and pragmatically oriented: emphasis upon the correlation of human conduct with natural phenomena for human security (cf. Shamanism); hence, motivation and regulations/guidances (mores) for individual conduct and community life.

## a. Basic beliefs:

(Considered rational according to established premises.)

(1) All existence is interrelated; there is no fundamental difference between animate existence (man, animal, plant life) and inanimate existence (material phenomena) since all possess and manifest natural forces or powers in varying degrees.

(2) All existences have a concentrated essence known as "spirit"; these spirits have relationships which are functional and balanced in Nature. Their imbalance, which sometimes happens in the natural and human orders of things, results in a "power struggle" of things or forces about which man must do something to preserve his own place and security in the total structure of existence. To do this, specialists perform prescribed ceremonies (often involving purification rites, sacrifices of valued objects, and accompanied by public festivals and feasts) which contact the natural order and help correlate the human order again with it.

"The spirit world of Vietnamese peasant belief is peopled with a great variety of supernatural beings, most of them malevolent, and with a host of wandering souls of criminals, spinsters and the victims of accidents. Vietnamese villagers believe, for example, in a general category of entities which can be called spirits of nature. All are associated with topographic features, insects, birds or animals. The peasant believes that spirits reside in many rock formations, especially those of peculiar shape in grottoes or in front of temples, or rocks in river rapids or along the seashores which present particularly great hazards to vessels. Several varieties of trees, including the fig, are believed to be inhabited by the souls of young girls who like to appear on earth and torment young men. The dangerous entities are to be avoided, placated or otherwise circumvented, and the benevolent ones may be venerated or appealed to for help.



(3) The harmonious relationship between your program and the Guardian Deity in the village or community.

(4) How your program can contribute to "religious cooperation" in the community.

(Note: If your consultant presents too many obstacles, seek another!)

Basic procedure for developing program rapport with various "systems" leaders and proponents:

(1) Make a courtesy call soon after your arrival.

(2) Explain your program or job in terms they can understand and respect.

(3) Ask for their description of your program or work in their terms understandable to you.

(4) Ask about their own program (organizational activities) or needs in public welfare and GVN terms.

(5) If feasible and desirable, establish an arrangement for future consultations.

(If they truly approve of you and your work, they will endorse it to their followers.)

d. Selected Reading:

Leopold Cadiere. Croyances et pratiques religieuses des Vietnamiens. (A basic work, now difficult to obtain.) In 3 volumes as follows:  
I. Saigon: Bulletin de la Societe des etudes indochinoises, Vol. XXXIII (1958), Parts 1-2. xiv, 243 pp., 8 plates. (A republication of his Croyances et pratiques religieuses des Annamites (Hanoi: Societe de Geographie de Hanoi, 1944).); II. Saigon: Ecole francaise d'Extreme-Orient, 1955. 343 pp., 58 figures; III. Saigon: Ecole francaise d'Extreme-Orient, 1957. 287 pp.

Gerald Cannon Hickey. Village in Vietnam. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964.

Chapter 3. Religions and Popular Beliefs, pp. 55-81. Cosmological View, Catholicism, Buddhism (includes Table 5. Calendar of Buddhist Rituals, p. 60), Cao Daism (includes Figure 16. Cao Daist Sects: Branches of the Tam Ky Pho Do Sect of Tay Ninh (1926), p. 66; Table 6. Ban Chin Dao Rituals, p. 69; Table 7. Tien Thien Rituals, p. 71), Other Cults, Popular Beliefs and Practices, Healers. (Cf. related data in other chapters.)

Chapter 8. The Cult Committee, pp. 214-232. Composition of the Khanh Hau Cult Committees (includes Table 16. Cult Committees in Khanh Hau, p. 214), The Dinh (includes Figure 25. Floor Plan of the Ap Dinh-A Dinh, p. 219), Ritual Responsibility of the Cult Committee, The High Venerables.

Minority Groups in the Republic of Vietnam. Washington, D.C.: CRESS, 1966.

U.S. Army Ethnographic Study Series, Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 550-105.

See Section VI. Religion in Chapters 1-18 in Part One. Tribal Groups, which concern the following tribes: Bahnar, Bru, Cua, Halang, Hre, Hroi, Jarai, Jeh, Katu, Koho, Ma, M'nong, Muong, Raglai, Rengao, Rhade, Sedang, Stieng.

## 2. Taoism (Dao-Giao)

Chinese originated; introduced several centuries B.C., politically important occasionally until 19th century A.D. (often with Buddhism vs. Confucianism). Still religiously and psychologically influential in Vietnamese society, particularly among the ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese.

Naturally based and oriented: At first, Taoism was a philosophic naturalism for the individual and recluse; later, it became a religious cult for vocational groups through esoteric practices which correlate the natural and human orders.

### a. Philosophical views:

Tao is the natural way--origin, aim, and functioning--of all things (which are interrelated). Those who possess and manifest it thereby have Teh (natural virtue=character=power).

Accordingly, the Taoist ideals are spontaneity and tranquillity in individual life, simplicity and sincerity in society and government, harmony and contentment between man and his environment. For example, water in itself is colorless, formless, unassuming, and quiescent, but in relation to others is powerful, persistent, life-sustaining and can rise above the highest mountains.

Everything is eternal and kept harmoniously balanced through the interaction of active and passive forces (cf. Yang-Yin) and the succession of the Five Agents/Elements (Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth) in rotation.

The wise man knows all this, lives accordingly, and as a specialist in Nature may help others to adapt themselves naturally to their environmental situation without conflict. Cf. modern organic farming.

### b. Religious practices:

"The Taoist pantheon contains a multiplicity of gods; there are deities for animate and inanimate objects, for stars, even for parts of the body. Some contend that the highest of these is 'The Jade Emperor' (Yu Huang), the supreme god of the whole universe. The Taoists have a trinity, 'The Three Pure Ones' (San Ch'ing), although the individual members may vary--Lao Tzu, Yu Huang, and the mythical ruler P'an Ku are one combination. The 'Three Rulers' (San Kuan) is another trinity sometimes believed to comprise Heaven, Earth, and Water and the three (perhaps legendary) rulers Yao, Shun, and Yu. Temples are frequently erected to gods who are actually personified ideas, mythical beings, and deified human beings. There are three types of Taoist heavens--ten 'Heavenly Grottoes,' thirty-six subsidiary 'Heavenly Grottoes,' and seventy-two 'Blessed Places'--ruled by immortals.

"Among the primary objectives of Taoism are happiness, wealth, health, the bearing of children, and longevity. Those who truly wanted to follow the Tao, that is, to realize the Three Original Principles of Taoism—Essence, Vital Force, and Spirit, adhered to a regimen which included 'meditation on Taoist truths, the cultivation of such Taoist attitudes as inaction and placidity . . . carefully regulated breathing, diet, discipline, moral living, and partaking of ever-greens . . . products of such plants as the plum, and certain minerals and jewels—gold, jade, and the pearl.

"Alchemy and astrology are integral parts of Taoism. The true Taoist seeks to achieve immortality by means of magical practices and drugs. Not only are these drugs believed capable of prolonging life for centuries, but they rejuvenate the body and enable the immortal to walk through fire unharmed, walk on water without sinking, rise into the air, control the spirits, and revive the dead.

"Superstitions are also an important part of Taoism, as is shown by the belief in geomancy (divination by means of figures or lines), fortune-telling, divination, and the use of charms and amulets. Traditionally, Chinese scholars and the more educated classes scorned Taoism as the 'superstitious cult of the 'stupid people.' They also associated medicine with Taoism, and as a result neglected it. Science was considered the province of the 'ignorant and lowly' and was, therefore left to the Taoist priests.

"Taoist professionals are called tao shih. The tao shih are recluses seeking immortality by meditating and leading ascetic lives; celibates living in monasteries; or married people living at home but earning a livelihood by officiating at burials, writing charms, exorcising evil spirits, or communicating with the dead. A devotee of Taoism enters the professional ranks through an apprenticeship.

"In the past, Taoist belief was associated with secret societies which were instrumental in overthrowing Chinese dynasties. In Communist China, the Taoists have been persecuted as counter-revolutionaries."\*

c. Program rapport prospects:

Consult a cooperative tao shih (Taoist professional) in your area as to:

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\*U.S., Department of the Army, Minority Groups in the Republic of Vietnam (Washington, D.C.: GRESS, 1966) (U.S. Army Ethnographic Study Series, D.A. Pamphlet No. 550-105). Part Two. Other Minority Groups, Chapter 22. The Chinese, Section VI. Religion, "Taoism," pp. 977-978; cf. Section V. Customs and Taboos, Subsection "Folk Beliefs," pp. 964-968.

- (1) The "natural way" to plan and establish your program.
- (2) The "simple way" to administer your program.
- (3) The "most appropriate/propitious time" to begin your program.
- (4) How your program can bring "happiness, wealth, health, family well-being, and longevity" to the community.

### 3. Confucianism (Khong-Giao)

Chinese originated; introduced several centuries B.C., politically important especially during Chinese domination (2nd-10th, early 15th centuries A.D.) and otherwise 13th to mid-19th centuries when supplanted by French colonial bureaucracy. Still socially influential in Vietnamese society, particularly among the ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese.

Metaphysically based and humanistically oriented: emphasis upon propriety and activity in social life.

#### a. Basic doctrines:

(Mostly applicable today to any society.)

The Heavenly Way (Chinese: T'ien-tao) is the morally operative principle by which society should develop and man should behave.

The Mean (Chung-yung) is that which is central and balanced; its adherence by man ensures the functioning of harmonious relationships in the human, natural, and cosmic orders.

Humanity (Jen) characterizes the true man and is expressed through his conscientiousness (chung) and altruism (shu).

The Superior Man (Chun Tzu) exemplifies Humanity and thus demonstrates the perfectibility of all men.

The Rectification of Names (Cheng-ming) is exercised by the Superior Man in governing others: be and do what you should in society. "This means not only that a name must correspond to its actuality, but also that rank, duties, and functions must be clearly defined and fully translated into action. Only then can a name be considered to be correct and rectified." (W.T. Chan)

Virtuous conduct exemplifies right knowledge and ensures stability in the human order in accordance with the natural order and thereby the cosmic order.

The past-present-future generations are interrelated and essentially one continuum of mankind; hence, the family is historically necessary and centrally important in society and for the well-regulated state.

#### b. Basic practices:

(Ethnic-customs distinguish various Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese forms of Confucianism.)

"Placing great emphasis on the practice of religious ritual, Confucianism has always promoted such ancient rites as the worship of heaven, homage to ancestors, and the commemoration of great men. In the past, the Emperor, representing the people, performed annual rites at the Altar of Heaven to ensure cooperation between man and the universe, to give thanks, and to pray for a good year. Confucianism advocates the sincere performance of rites of ancestor worship, not because ancestors have power over the living, but rather to unify the dead and the living and so strengthen the family unit. To show respect for great men, Confucianists, as a matter of tradition, built temples in their honor and performed seasonal rites to them. The most respected of these was and is, of course, Confucius; temples in his honor have been erected in nearly all Vietnamese provinces. In general, however, Confucius has not been deified but has been given such titles as duke, king, 'Great Perfection, Ultimate Sage and Foremost Teacher.'

"Confucianism is not an institutional religion with a sacred scripture, clergy, or creed; it is, however, religious in its observance of traditional rites and in its philosophy. Confucianism does not teach immortality in the sense of the existence of a heaven and hell; it does teach immortality in the humanistic sense of virtue, wisdom, and achievement. Good and evil ensure their own consequences.

"Confucianist temples, located in the major towns of the Republic of Viet-Nam, contain only altars, honorary tablets, and maxims from Confucius carved on panels. Traditionally, Vietnamese, and perhaps the Chinese, Confucianists celebrated the festival of Confucius in the autumn, on a day designated by the astrologers. Offerings of flowers and rice wine were placed on the maxim altars and an invocation read before each one. The ritual was repeated before the altars of the four philosophers, the altars of the parents of Confucius, and the 72 tablets of the eminent scholars. Instead of temples of Confucius, villages have altars to the Master of Philosophy; larger villages might group together three altars in one enclosure, whereas smaller villages would have only one.

"Confucianism has had a profound effect on the economic organization of Chinese society. Coupled with the cult of the ancestors, Confucianism stresses the importance of family, the creation of a true kinship society, and the procreation of male heirs, essential to the perpetuation of the clan. Largely due to Confucianist teaching, the Chinese family forms a tight economic unit, an affluent member often providing for all. A consequence of Confucianism has been the tendency to avoid risk unless the interests of the family are at stake."\*

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\*Ibid., Section VI., Religion, Subsection "Confucianism," pp. 979-980; cf. Section V., Customs and Taboos, Subsection "Concept of Etiquette," pp. 973-974.

See also Duong Buu, The Confucian Tradition in the History of Vietnamese Education (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1958); and Le-van-Dinh, Le Culte des Ancêtres en Droit Annamite (Paris: Les Editions Domat-Montchrestien, 1934) 176 pp.

c. Program rapport prospects:

Consult a cooperative Confucian scholar or elder in your area as to:

- (1) How you can "rectify names" (Cheng-ming) in your program.
- (2) How your program can exemplify "humanity" (Jen).
- (3) How you can follow "the Mean" (Chung-yung) in the administration of your program.
- (4) How your program can enhance "the status and welfare of families" in the community.



#### 4. Buddhism (Phat-Giao)

Indian-Chinese originated; introduced in 2nd century A.D. or probably earlier, spread during 2nd-10th centuries, Vietnamese developed and popularized during 10th-early 13th centuries (called by Vietnamese Buddhists "the Golden Age" when Buddhism was politically most influential, the country relatively free from foreign/Chinese domination, public welfare and culture flourished) and 16th-18th centuries, organizational reform since 1920's; politically, militarily, culturally important frequently during the Dinh, Le, later Ly, Tran, later Le (both the Trinh in the north and Nguyen in the south), and Tay Son Dynasties (also note uprisings of 1142, 1516, 1860's to 1880's). Still religiously, culturally, and sometimes politically influential in Vietnamese society, particularly among the ethnic Cambodians, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

Metaphysically based and humanistically oriented: motivation and guidances for individual conduct, community life, national culture and politics.

Buddhism is essentially a way of life, rather than exclusively a philosophy or religion: the realization of human freedom in perfect existence (Pali Nibbana, Sanskrit Nirvana) through (a) a mode of conduct integrated with (b) a method of thinking, as first attained, taught, and exemplified by the Buddha.

In Viet-Nam, Buddhism is variously called Phat-giao (the Buddha's teaching) by Vietnamese Mahayanists, Fo-chiao (the Buddha's teaching) by Chinese Mahayanists, and Buddha Sasana (the Buddha's way of life in society) or Buddha Dhamma (the Buddha's doctrine) by Cambodian and Vietnamese Theravadins.

Three valued components comprise Buddhism as a system of thought and conduct, and fundamentally orient all Buddhist beliefs and practices: (a) the Buddha (Phat-to, Fo-t'o, cf. "ancestor"; the Enlightened One) who first conceived, taught, and exemplified "the perfected human way of life," (b) the Dhamma (or Dharma, Phat-phap, Fo-fa; the Teaching of the Buddha) which was subsequently taught as doctrine and expounded by his followers (Phat-tu, cf. "offspring") who together came to comprise (c) the Sangha (Phat-tang or Tang-giao, Seng; the Buddhist Order) which is the Buddhist monastic organization supported by the Buddhist laity.

##### a. Basic doctrines:

(Can be presented and understood in contemporary meaningful terms.)

All life (individual, communal, societal) is unsatisfactory and imperfect ("suffering" is an inadequate translation) because all existence, animate and inanimate, is:

(1) Changing and not permanent; hence, birth and death are regarded as complementary "great changes" (not opposites or absolutes) and societal change is natural. (However, most Buddhists value individual life, although temporary, and welcome or resist societal and governmental changes according to the estimated effect upon their traditional role-status, personal well-being, and organizational aims.)

(2) Relational and not independent; hence, no "soul" or isolated metaphysical self abides. (However, Buddhists recognize a "functional self" or "psychological personality" and may even practice ethnocentric nationalism in the midst of intercultural relations.)

(3) Conditioned by many causal-factors and not free; hence, there is no "first cause or creation" and the human potential is not yet fully realized. (However, Buddhists differentiate primary and secondary causes of a complex situation, but sometimes according to premises not easily recognized by non-Buddhists.)

Furthermore, if man fails to comprehend (not think correctly about) these three facts of life and thereby fails to act wisely (not do right accordingly), he will compound and not fundamentally solve his existential predicament (not be truly human, existing perfectly and freely). Therefore, the Buddhist solution is proffered to all sentient beings in four phases of complementary thought and action, called the Four Noble Principles ("Truths" is an inadequate translation because, when practiced, these "principles" are epistemologically recognized as "the real truth" and metaphysically realized as "the true reality"):

(1) The First Principle: The present situation and the recognition that all existence, as above noted, is (a) changing and not permanent, (b) relational and not independent, and (c) conditioned by many causal-factors and not free. (Buddhists regard this Principle as being eminently "realistic.")

(2) The Second Principle: The present situation and the analysis of such state of all existence being due to many causal-factors which themselves are changing, relational, and multi-conditioned. (Buddhists regard this Principle as being eminently "scientific.")

(3) The Third Principle: The present situation and realization that these causal-factors can be eliminated, epistemologically and metaphysically, through Enlightenment (Bodhi) and thereby human freedom in perfect existence (Nibbana, Nirvana) can be attained and experienced. (Buddhists regard this Principle as being eminently "optimistic.")

(4) The Fourth Principle: The present situation and the practice of the way to recognize, analyze, and realize the actual and ultimate nature of existence, as stated above. (Buddhists regard this Principle as being eminently "practical".)

b. Basic practices:

The proffered Buddhist way of life is essentially the integration and manifestation of right-thought and right-conduct in right-human existence. This constitutes the one and only Middle Way which is no mere compromise, or dialectic of opposites, or proposal for a neutralism which ignores the exigent problems of life and does nothing about them. (Thus in practice, Buddhism should not be a "withdrawal-from-life.")

(1) The Eightfold Path is an amplification of the Middle Way; it consists of the following interrelated activities;

- Right understanding
- Right thought
- Right speech
- Right action
- Right livelihood
- Right effort
- Right mindfulness
- Right concentration

(2) The Threefold Training provides instruction and guidance for those who strive toward Enlightenment; it consists of the following inter-related activities:

- Training in virtuous conduct, which enables higher morality;
- Training in meditative concentration, which enables higher thought;
- Training in transcendent comprehension and understanding, which enables higher insight.

(3) The Vinaya or training rules for members of the Sangha are self-imposed (hence, not "commandments"), but their infraction will incur disciplinary action (expulsion for breaking the initial four rules) by the Sangha in assembly. They also serve as the norm or guidances for good behavior for the Buddhist laity. The number of these rules varies: traditionally 227 for the Theravada Sangha, about 256 for the Mahayana Sangha; the first 10 for any Sangha or monastery, a somewhat similar 10 for the laity; all of which the initial 5 are regarded as the most important:

- Abstinence from destroying life (needlessly);
- Abstinence from stealing (taking what is not given freely);

Abstinence from sexually immoral conduct (chastity for the Sangha, non-adultery for the laity);  
 Abstinence from lying (not adhering to the truth);  
 Abstinence from the use of intoxicants (which induce inhuman behavior and impair the Threefold Training described above).

(4) The Four Sublime States are observed in three ways: as virtues to be exemplified, as objects of meditation, and as states of mind or being. They provide the ethical criteria for Theravada conduct and may be used by the Cambodian and Vietnamese Theravadins for evaluating American activities in South Viet-Nam. They are:

Loving-kindness or benevolence toward all beings;  
 Compassion toward all beings;  
 Joyous sympathy or gladness in the well-being of others;  
 Equanimity toward all beings.

(5) The Six Perfections are requisites of the Bodhisattva (a potential Buddha who exemplifies perfect wisdom for the sake of others). They provide the ethical criteria for Mahayana conduct and may be used by the Chinese and Vietnamese Mahayanists for evaluating American activities in South Viet-Nam. They are:

Giving freely (without expecting compensation)  
 Virtuous conduct  
 Forbearance or tolerance  
 Energy or perseverance  
 Meditative concentration  
 Transcendent comprehension and understanding

c. Program rapport prospects:

Consult a cooperative Buddhist monk, nun, or Hoa Hao leader in your area (note hierarchical ranks) as to:

(1) The "changing, relational, and conditioned aspects" of your program.

(2) How your program can exemplify or fulfill "the Bodhisattva ideal" (unselfishly help the well-being of others).

(3) How your program would be judged according to "the Four Sublime States" (Theravada criteria) or "the Six Perfections" (Mahayana criteria).

(4) How your program can contribute to "religious cooperation" in the community.

d. Principal Buddhist groups in South Viet-Nam:

(1) Cambodian Theravada (in several factions, concentrated in 11 provinces in the III and IV Corps areas and Saigon);

(2) Chinese Mahayana (in several sects, concentrated in Cholon-Saigon and large towns elsewhere);

(3) Vietnamese Theravada (in several factions, concentrated in 12 provinces in the I, III, and IV Corps areas and Cholon-Saigon);

(4) Vietnamese Mahayana (in various sects, organizations, and factions, found almost everywhere except in the Central Highlands);

Note present national goals of the Vietnamese Mahayanists (expressed particularly by the Chua An Quang-UBA; cf. the "Buddhist Golden Age" during the 10th-13th centuries A.D.):

(1) Free South Viet-Nam from foreign domination (Chinese, French, American; VC are Vietnamese and not foreigners).

(2) Preserve Vietnamese national identity and culture (cf. Hanoi's independence from Chinese Communists and Soviet ideologies).

(3) Ensure social justice and public welfare (through a Buddhist oriented government and its aid to Buddhist institutions and projects).

(4) Reform government administration (and structure? Buddhist aim to have a more representative government for Paris peace talks, South Viet-Nam public needs, and Buddhist interests).

(5) Secure public security and national peace (through a better GVN and restricted U.S. government aid).

(6) In general, an increasing neutralism: reject foreign assistance which "enslaves" and "liberation" which kills; hence, no real cooperation with present GVN or NLF.

(5) Vietnamese Hoa Hao (a lay reform movement in Buddhism, founded in 1939 by Huyen Phu So, a mystic from Hoa Hao village in An Giang Province; in several factions, concentrated in 10 provinces in the IV Corps area). The Phat-Giao Hoa-Hao is briefly described as follows:

"Those interested in becoming followers of Huyen Phu So, the Master, are not asked to undergo any public ceremony of initiation, but are merely obliged to observe So's teachings: To abide by the Four Ordinances and the Eight Points of Honesty, and to receive four prayers a day.

"The four prayers are prescribed as the following: the first to Buddha, the second to the 'Reign of the Enlightened King . . . when the world will know peace,' the third to living and dead parents and relatives. The fourth to the 'mass of small people to whom I wish to have the will to improve themselves, to be charitable, and to liberate themselves from the shackles of ignorance.' These prayers are said before an empty table covered with a red (actually maroon) cloth as a symbol of universal understanding. The cloth is red because the Vietnamese (Hoa Hao) consider red the all embracing color. Four magical Chinese characters, 'Bao Son Ky Houg' ('a scent from a strange mountain'), adorn the cloth.

"The four precepts of the Hoa Hao religion are: (1) to honor one's parents; (2) to love one's country; (3) to respect Buddhism and its teachings; and (4) to love one's fellow man.

"The only physical offerings sanctioned by the Hoa Hao sect are water (preferably rainwater) as an indication of cleanliness, local flowers as a sign of purity, and small offerings of incense to chase away evil spirits. Prayers and offerings are made only to Buddha and Vietnamese national heroes, not to the genii or deities recognized by other Vietnamese religions.

"On the moral level, Huyen Phu So preached virtue: children should obey their parents; bureaucrats should be good and just toward their constituents; spouses should be faithful to one another. To reform and to simplify the practice of Buddhism without altering the basic doctrine, So imposed interdicts on his followers. The Hoa Hao faithful are forbidden to drink alcoholic beverages, smoke opium, participate in games of chance, or eat ox or buffalo meat. In addition, they may eat neither meat nor other greasy foods on the 1st, 14th, 15th and 30th days of the lunar month."\*

#### Selected readings:

Chaplain Corps Planning Group, Chaplains Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel, U. S. Navy. "Phat Giao Hoa Hoa," The Religions of South Viet-Nam in Faith and Fact. (NAVPERS 15991) (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Naval Personnel, Department of the Navy, 1967). Section X, pp. 53-58.

(Introductory remarks), Location, The Founder, Religious Doctrines of the Hoa Hao, The Hoa Hao Flag, Founding Day Commemoration, The Mother of Huyen Phu So, Hoa Hao Village, Religious Practices of the Hoa Hao, Organization of the Hoa Hao, Miscellanea and Guidelines of American/Vietnamese/Hoa Hao Rapport; Population Map; Bibliography.

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\*Ibid, Chapter 23. The Hoa Hao, Section VI. Hoa Haoism as a Religion, selected from pp. 1040-1041.

Bernard B. Fall. "The Political-Religious Sects of Viet-Nam," Pacific Affairs, Volume XXVIII, No. 3 (September 1955), pp. 235-252, with a map showing the location of sects in South Viet-Nam during April-June 1955.

Minority Groups in the Republic of Vietnam. (Ethnographic Study Series. Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 550-105.) (Washington, D.C.: CRESS, 1966).

Part Two. Other Minority Groups. Chapter 23. The Hoa Hao, pp. 1021-1045. (Map, p. 1020, showing Areas of Greatest Influence and Territories Held in 1965.) Section I. Introduction, pp. 1021-1022; Section II. Early History and Status during World War II, pp. 1023-1026; Section III. Status during the Indochina War, pp. 1027-1031; Section IV. Status during the Diem Regime, pp. 1032-1037; Section V. Status since the Diem Regime, pp. 1038-1039; Section VI. Hoa Haoism as a Religion, pp. 1040-1041; Footnotes, pp. 1043-1045.

Stephen Schlafer. The Hoa Hao: An Introduction. Prepared for The Simulmatics Corporation, 16 East 41st Street, New York, N.Y., 10017. Draft: For Official Use Only. Studies of Entrepreneurship and National Integration in South Vietnam. Sponsored by Advanced Research Projects Agency, Washington, D.C., ARPA Order No. 1002. February 1968. ii, iii, p. 148. (The most detailed study available, includes 8 chapters, 11 appendices, bibliography.)

## 5. Catholicism (Cong-Giao)

Western originated; introduced in mid-16th century, spread during 17th-18th centuries, governmentally favored mid-19th to mid-20th centuries (French orientation). Still influential in various ways in Vietnamese society, particularly among the ethnic Vietnamese.

Divinely based and spiritually oriented: inspiration and commandments or regulations for the self, family, community, and nation.

### a. Basic doctrines:

(Not well understood by Buddhists and other Vietnamese, Cambodians, or Chinese. Presumably known to the American student, although some Vietnamese interpretations of Catholic theology may differ from American understanding of it.)

### b. Organizational description:

(Program oriented by Westernized methods.)

"Catholicism, which many Vietnamese associate with imperial expansion and resent as an alien Western religion, established a solid position in the country under French rule and capitalized on its gains under President Diem. The French encouraged Catholicism as a balance to Buddhism. During their administration and most of the decade thereafter, Catholicism added to its following, expanded its hierarchy, and engaged in numerous teaching, health and charitable programs.

"Under President Ngo, Catholics in general had an advantage over non-Catholics in obtaining government positions. In addition, opportunities for education were relatively more accessible to Catholics, through the mission-operated schools. In 1957, at the instigation of the President's brother, the archbishop of Hue, a new university under Catholic direction was established in Da Lat. In 1959, in Saigon Cathedral, Viet-Nam was dedicated to the Heart of the Immaculate Virgin, a gesture which symbolically placed South Viet-Nam among the Catholic countries of the world.

"Official estimates, published in 1966, gave the Roman Catholic population of the country as 1,560,000 persons, of whom about half are refugees from North Viet-Nam. The refugees are, for the most part, poorly educated peasants who in North Viet-Nam had lived in exclusively Catholic villages where their contacts with non-Catholic Vietnamese had been rare. In South Viet-Nam they again found themselves largely isolated from the rest of the population, having been placed at first in hastily created resettlement centers and later moved to permanent refugee villages, usually in the Central Highlands.



"Catholics born in South Viet-Nam live mainly in the cities and the coastal areas of the northern provinces. The Saigon Catholic community is upper-middle class and is well represented in the civil service, the liberal professions and the armed forces. An estimated 25 percent of the country's educated elite are Catholics. Catholics of the northern provinces are a heavily outnumbered minority and, reportedly, have reverted to a self-effacing role.

"The country is divided ecclesiastically into 13 dioceses, with some 700 local parishes, each headed by a priest. Over all is a papal delegate stationed in Hue. Several religious orders with branches throughout the country carry out welfare activities. In early 1966 there were more than 1,700 priests, 4,000 nuns and 625 seminarists. Some 265,000 primary-level students and 133,000 high school students were in Catholic-run schools, while the University of Da Lat had an enrollment of 1,300. Several small Catholic newspapers are published, of which one had a circulation of approximately 15,000. The Catholic Church operated 26 hospitals, 7 leprosariums, 55 orphanages and 19 rest-houses."\*

c. Program rapport prospects:

Consult a cooperative Catholic father or nun in your area (note hierarchical ranks) as to:

- (1) How your program can improve "social welfare programs."
- (2) How your program can assist "education."
- (3) How your program can benefit "public health."
- (4) How your program can contribute to "religious cooperation" in the community.

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\*Area Handbook for South Vietnam, op. cit., Section on The Faiths, Subsection "Catholicism," p. 187.

See also U.S., Department of the Navy, The Religions of South Vietnam in Faith and Fact (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Naval Personnel, Dept. of the Navy, 1967) (NAVPERS 15991), Section VII. Roman Catholicism in South Viet-Nam, pp. 37-41, which gives a chronology of important dates, map showing Dioceses in South Viet-Nam, statistical tables of Dioceses in North and South Viet-Nam, and a bibliography.

## 6. Cao Daism (Dai-Dao Tam-Ky Pho-Do)

Vietnamese originated in 1919, institutionally founded 18-20 November 1926, Holy See established at Tay Ninh in March 1927, organizationally developed during 1930's, militarily active during 1940's-1950's, political resurgence in 1960's. Politically and religiously influential among some Vietnamese.

Spiritually based and syncretically oriented toward all religions:

First Revelation was given to several "missionary saints": Nhien-dang Co-Phat for Buddhism, Thai Thuong Lao Quan for Taoism, the Emperor Phuc-Hy for Ancestor Worship, and Moses for Judeo-Christian religious concepts.

Second Revelation was given later to Lao Tzu for Taoism, Confucius for Confucianism, Shakyamuni for Buddhism, Jesus Christ for Christianity, and the Prophet Muhammad for Islam.

Third (and final) Revelation of God was given on Phu Quoc Island, South Viet-Nam, in 1919 to Ngo Van Chieu, the Cao Dai founder, by means of a corbeille-a-bec (beaked-bag), a special divination instrument.

A syncretism of Vietnamese Animism, Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Catholicism which aspires to be universally accepted.

### a. "Fundamental Principles of Cao Daism:"

"Cao Dai doctrine seeks to reconcile all religious convictions as well as to adapt to all degrees of spiritual evolution:

1. Morally, Cao Dai doctrine reminds man of his duties toward himself, his family, society, humanity, and the universal family.
2. Philosophically, it preaches contempt of honors, riches, and luxury, or the release from servitude to materialism in the quest for tranquillity of spirit.
3. Culturally, it advocates adoration of God and veneration of the higher spirits who constitute the august hierarchy of the occult. Although the Vietnamese national cult of the ancestors is permitted, carnal offerings as well as use of votive papers are condemned.
4. Spiritually, it confirms the existence of a soul whose successive reincarnations, as well as the posthumous consequences of its human actions, are regulated by the Law of Karma.

"There are three types of Cao Dai adherents and three types of rules governing their behavior:

1. The religious practitioners, the high dignitaries, are compelled to lead a life of privation, if not of asceticism: sexual relations are prohibited; alcohol, meat, and fish are taboo, a strict vegetarianism being recommended. These believers have the authority to communicate with God and the higher spirits, but must do so only on exceptional occasions.
2. Mediums, auxiliaries to the dignitaries, are not monks or nuns themselves, but are obliged to observe certain material privations. They are forbidden to practice spiritism except in the presence of dignitaries, after the latter have recited certain prayers.
3. Of the ordinary followers, the mass of believers, little is required except that they follow the duties and moral teachings laid down by the Cao Dai executive body and that they prostrate themselves regularly every day before the Cao Dai altar, whether in a temple or at home. On the altar must be a drawing of an eye encircled by clouds, ritual candlesticks, and offerings of fruit, flowers, tea, and incense.

b. "The Cult of Cao Daism;"

"The Cao Dai cult demands only that its followers address daily prayers to the Supreme Being at 6 a.m., noon, 6 p.m., and midnight. Neither confessions nor communications are required--spiritual evocations, being of a delicate and dangerous nature, are reserved for the priestly hierarchy. Cao Dai rituals commence with the offering of incense (niem huong); then follow the prayers (khai kinh), the canticle to the glory to God (recited in unison), and three more canticles in honor of the three saints--Confucius, Lao Tzu, and Buddha. From time to time, the priests exhort the faithful to practice a virtuous existence, as conceived by Confucius, and to venerate the spirits who have benefited mankind at various times--Christ, Buddha, Confucius, and ancient Chinese deities. On holidays, including Christmas and the traditional Buddhist fetes, more elaborate ceremonies take place.

"Cao Daism preaches universal love, which is manifested in human fraternity, kindness to animals (our less evolved brothers), kindness toward plants (which provide us with shade and medicines), and service to one's brother. The Cao Daist must be ready to assist, through words and action, anyone in need of help; by helping others, he will assure his own salvation, and by leading an exemplary life, he will win souls to the glory of God.

"Cao Daism provides Five Interdicts to be observed by its followers:

1. Do not kill living things--because of life, the center of consciousness, which resides within them.
2. Do not be covetous--in order to avoid falling into materialism through the need for possessions and domination.
3. Do not eat meat or drink alcohol.
4. Do not be tempted by the sensual.
5. Do not lie---verbal sins are as punishable as accomplished crimes."\*

c. Program rapport prospects:

Consult a cooperative Cao Dai dignitary in your area (note hierarchical ranks) as to:

1. How your program can promote "public welfare" (remind man of his duties toward himself, his family, society, and country).
2. How your program can prevent or minimize "the threat of materialism" among youth.
3. How your program can "spiritually enhance" the Vietnamese people.
4. How your program can contribute to "religious cooperation" in the community.

d. Selected readings:

Chaplain Corps Planning Group, Chaplains Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel, U.S. Navy, "Cao Dai," The Religions of South Vietnam in Faith and Fact (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Naval Personnel, Department of the Navy, 1967) (NAVPERS 15991), Section IX, pp. 47-52.

(Introductory remarks), Cao Dai Name, Major Doctrines of the Cao Dai, Organization of the Cao Dai, Holy City of Tay Ninh, Worship Symbols, Major Appeal of Cao Daism in Vietnam, Miscellanea; Bibliography; Population Table; Illustrations; Map of Cao Dai Areas.

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\*Minority Groups in the Republic of Vietnam, op. cit., Part Two. Other Minority Groups, Chapter 20. The Cao Dai, Section VII. Cao Daism as a Religion, selected from pp. 848-850.

Direction des Affaires Politiques et de la Surete, Le Caodaisme: 1926-1934 (Contribution a l'Histoire des Mouvements Politiques de l' Indochine Francaise, 7) (Hanoi: Gouvernement General de l'Indochine, 1934).

Bernard B. Fall, "The Political-Religious Sects of Viet-Nam," Pacific Affairs, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 3 (September 1955), pp. 235-252, with a map showing the location of sects in South Viet-Nam during April-June 1955.

Gabriel Gobron, Histoire et philosophie du Caodaisme (Paris: Dervy, 1949; Saigon: Tu Hai Publishing House, 1950).

Marg. Gab. Gobron, Le Caodaisme en Images (Paris: Dervy, 1949), iv. pp., 175 illustrations from photographs.

Gerald Cannon Hickey, "A Brief History of Cao Daism," in his Village in Vietnam (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964). Appendix B, pp. 290-294.

Nguyen Trung Hau, Histoire Sommaire du Caodaisme (Saigon: Pham Van Son, 1956) (same published by Trung Hung Giao Ly Vien in Danang?)

U.S., Department of the Army, Minority Groups in the Republic of Vietnam (Washington, D.C.: CRESS, 1966) (Ethnographic Study Series, DA Pamphlet No. 550-105).

Part Two. Other Minority Groups. Chapter 20. The Cao Dai, pp. 827-857 (Map, p. 826, showing Maximum Extent of Territory controlled by the Cao Dai, April-June 1955); Section I. Introduction, pp. 827-829; Section II. Early History and Organization, pp. 830-834; Section III. Status during World War II, pp. 835-837; Section IV. Status during the Indochina War, pp. 838-841; Section V. Status during the Diem Regime, pp. 842-845; Section VI. Status Since the Diem Regime, pp. 846-847; Section VII. Cao Daism as a Religion, pp. 848-850 (directly translated from Gabriel Gobron, Histoire et philosophie du Caodaisme (Paris: Dervy, 1949), pp. 38-47); Origins of Cao Dai Doctrine, Fundamental Principles of Cao Daism, the Cult of Cao Daism; Section VIII. Splinter Sects, pp. 851-854; Footnotes, pp. 855-857.

Pham Cong Tac, Le Caodaisme--Phap-Chanh-Truyen (Paris: Dervy, 1953).

# PERSPECTIVE

## The Action Game

and

## The Harmony Game

All Americans working in Vietnam find themselves at one time or another faced with the Vietnamese "way of doing things;" to the degree that we do not understand it, we may feel frustrated, and frustration unfortunately frequently finds an outlet in unthinking hostility. Our way, we are convinced, is really the only one that can work, and only stupid people would fail to see that.

Nothing could be further from the truth. We are foreigners working in the midst of the Vietnamese cultural system, with its attitudes and behavior patterns. The methodology of our advisory efforts must be attuned to that system—not our own.

Indeed there are attitudinal differences between Americans and Vietnamese—differences stemming from our different cultural backgrounds.

In analyzing these differences, we must realize that there are really two sets of attitudes in each of our cultures. One is the "real" attitude, the one which makes us act and think as we do. The other is our "self-image"—our idealized picture of ourselves. There may be a difference between the real and self-image attitude, and this dif-

ference is significant. We all use our self-image attitude to measure other people. Americans measure Vietnamese behavior by our idealized image of what Americans are like; and Vietnamese compare us against what they think of as ideal Vietnamese patterns.

norm. (For instance, many of us think that a man who wears a beard must be an odd-ball).

The Vietnamese real attitude is fairly similar to ours. They too have a fairly rigid value system, which is now beginning to change. Their system, however, is more

by Dr. Abraham M. Hirsch

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photos by SP4 Paul Temple



Americans, for instance, think of themselves as non-traditional and non-conformist, free from the cultural debris which we feel the Europeans and others have carried with them for centuries. In reality, our value system is fairly rigid, although now beginning to change. We are conformists; we expect men to conform, and we suspect and scorn deviations from the

formal and protocol-minded than ours. The emphasis is more on *how* a thing is done than on *what* is done. (By the way, their real and idealized attitudes are closer to each other than are ours.)

This, then, is one of the first seeds of misunderstanding. We tell the Vietnamese that we are people for whom tradition and conformism are unimportant (when in

reality we are conformists). This misconception, which Vietnamese get from Americans, is reinforced by our roles as advisors—roles which essentially require us to tamper with Vietnamese traditions in some manner, be it in agriculture, government or education.

This aggravates the Vietnamese picture of Americans as a people who understand neither the value of tradition, nor what Vietnamese traditions mean to the Vietnamese. They see us as people who lack tradition, a people with a short history (compared to theirs) and a people who live on a "borrowed" culture (our language is English; our literature is largely European).

American and Vietnamese attitudes toward life and the "game" of living also vary. Americans are monistic (selecting one alternative out of every set of possibilities, and rejecting the rest). The selected alternative is "good"; the rejected alternatives are "bad".

The Vietnamese, however, are pluralistic. They may choose one alternative of every set, but they

don't reject the others. Instead of polarizing "good" and "bad", they choose a middle path, which in turn makes them "harmony-oriented".

Our monism holds true for matters of importance and unimportance. We expect a person born into one religion to keep it all his life; we look askance at people who dabble in various religions, or in varieties of politics. We even tend to have monistic attitudes in our consumption patterns—a strongly favored brand of cigarette, a particular kind of drink that we order monistically whenever we step up to the bar. Be it important or unimportant, we give monistic loyalty and support to what we have selected as our good.

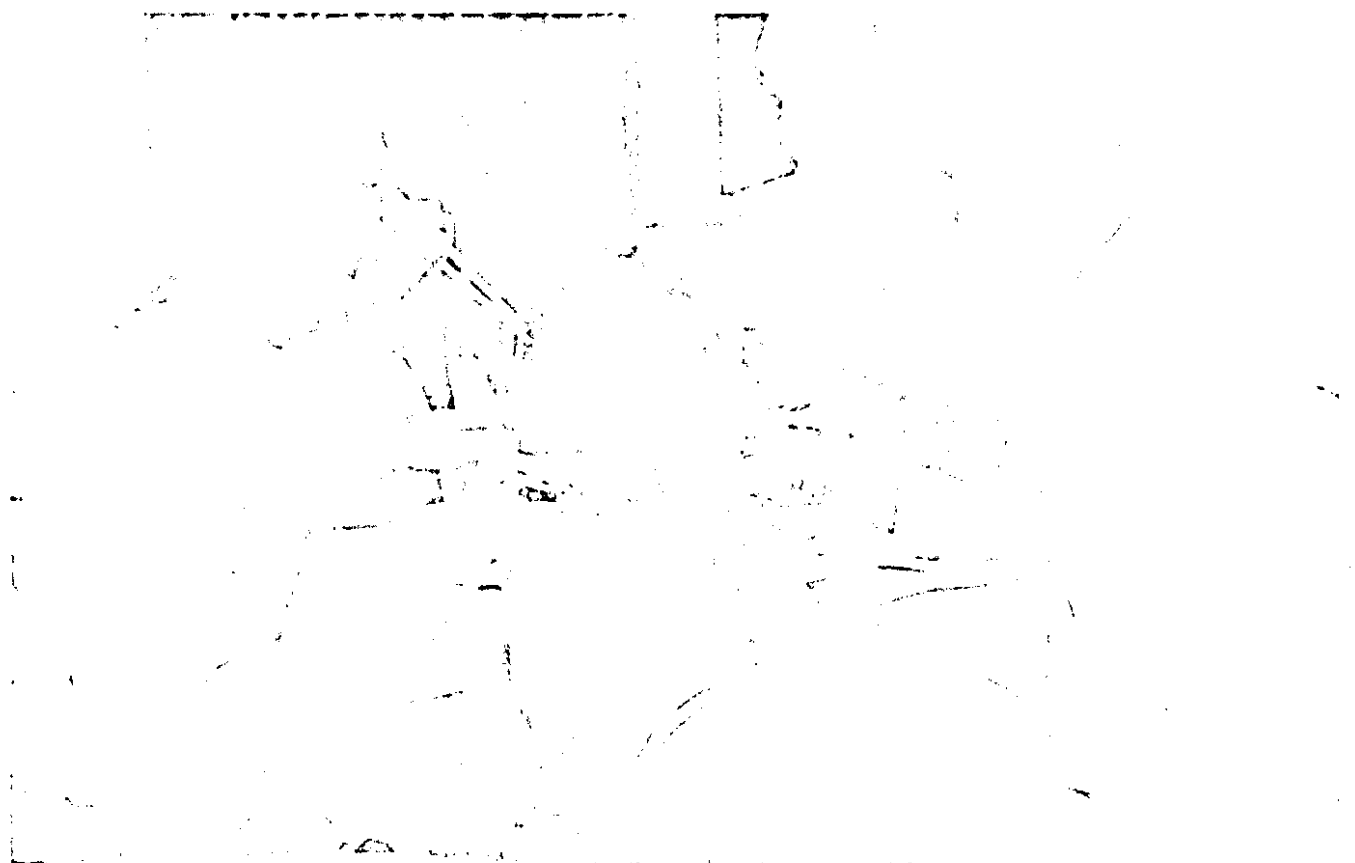
This sharp division between good and bad leads us to believe there must always be a clash between the two—a great Armageddon—in which we optimistically believe good will triumph, if only the battle is waged properly with enough effort. But we are also realists, and we know that some evil will survive. There will follow

a new process of polarization, and new Armageddons, on into infinity. This polarization of life leads to structuring our lives for action, to marshalling our forces to fight for our "selected right" against what we have rejected as "evil". We are action-oriented in all our activities (we even have reached the point where we structure our leisure time into "fun-actions").

The pluralistic Vietnamese do not see life as a contest between good and evil (though, of course, the Vietnamese recognize the difference between good and evil as clearly as we do). The Vietnamese see the two existing in equal amounts, co-existing in the world.

The wise man avoids extremes, follows the middle path, and seeks to live harmoniously in the valley of the mainstream of life. On either side of the valley are the two mountains. A man wanting to be truly good or truly evil can withdraw to the mountain of goodness, or the mountain of evil. But a man who has mastered the game of life—the harmony game—lives in the valley, manipulating both

*He won't deprive his family in order to help his public charge, but he also won't divert anything or everything to the family at the expense of his followers' needs...*



good and evil in order to come out a bit ahead, but realizing all the while that life is a mixture of good and evil.

But the valley is a difficult place. There are little patches of good and evil right next to each other. People in the valley know they must move cautiously; they never move in a straight line, because if they do so, inevitably they will step on spots of evil which will trap them. The wise man stands, probes as if for mines, and is willing to wait whenever a heavy fog obscures what is around him. The harmony game, unlike the Armageddon game, places no premium on quick action. Time is something there is lots of; it is a friend, an ally, a last resort, an ultimate weapon.

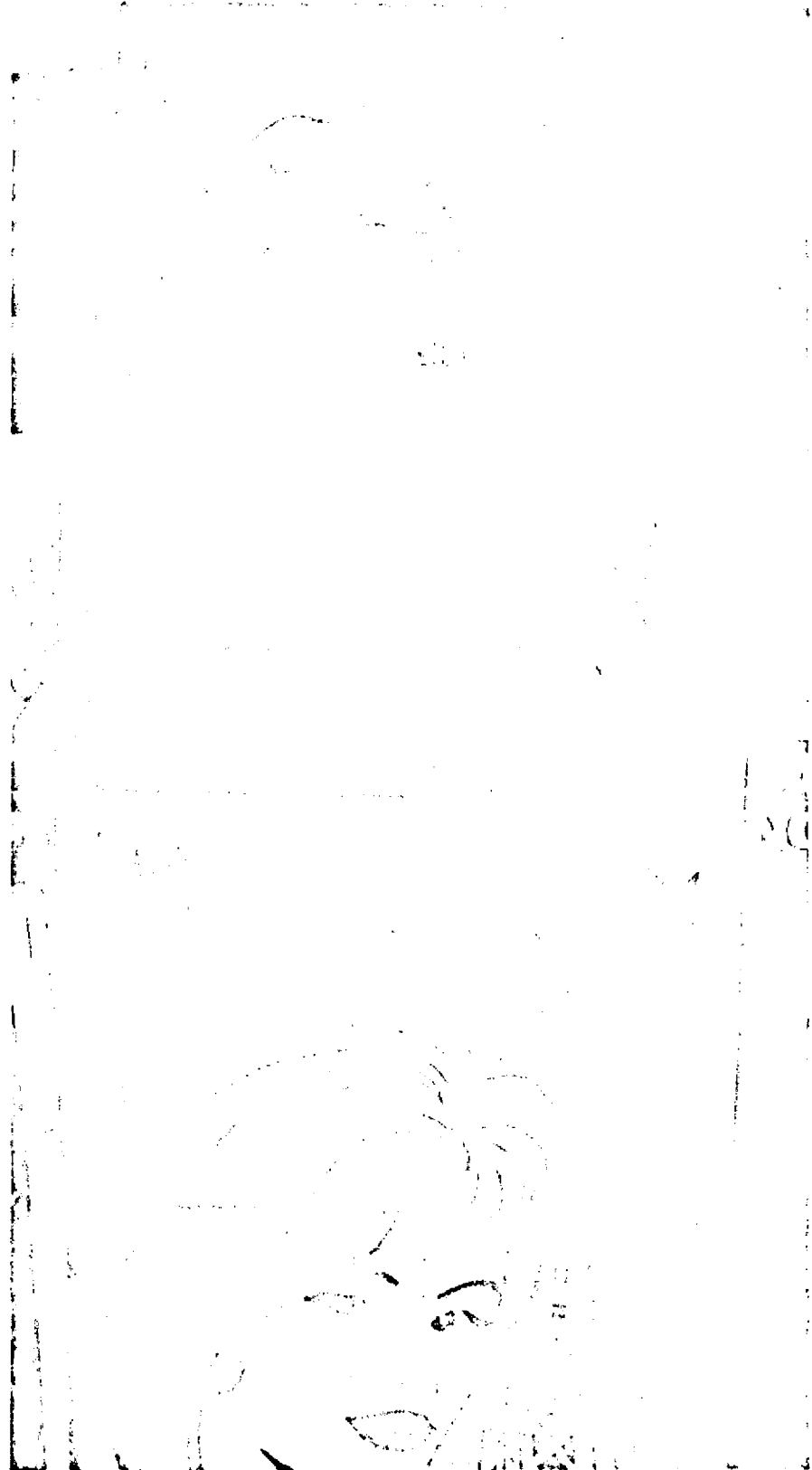
The wise man knows that good and evil co-exist in that valley, that they succeed each other like a pendulum that swings back and forth. Any human interference creates a risk of disrupting the balance and creating even greater disharmony—upsetting the natural balance.

It is this attitudinal difference that causes American frustration with Vietnamese counterparts, and vice-versa. The action-oriented American doesn't believe in wasting a moment, and feels it is safer to act than not to act. But the harmony game player knows that the pendulum will swing back by itself and redress the balance. Actions—interference with this balance—should be taken cautiously, at the right moment, after long and careful planning.

More often than not, they are not really actions directed at the goal, but semi-actions, lateral moves brought to bear against the background of the situation rather than against the focal point. Semi-actions use intermediary persons or things, real or fictitious. Americans consider semi-actions as futile or deceitful. The American prefers the direct frontal attack against evil, charge after charge at Armageddon. Vietnamese often feel that their American counterpart's action-orientation smacks of recklessness, wastefulness, and lack of finesse.

Action-oriented Americans have definite rules of gamesmanship structured on a scale of violence depending upon the particular type of Armageddon we are fighting. For instance, in a dispute with a colleague at a staff meeting, one doesn't use violence, one uses verbal persuasion. But in the valley

*There are differences stemming from our different cultural backgrounds.*





# The Action Game...

*The Harmony game, unlike the Armageddon game, places no premium on quick action...*

of the mainstream of life, there is only one rule—the rule of the harmony-game. If that rule is discarded, there are no other rules, then anything goes, any violence is permissible since harmony has been destroyed, and since there has already been rejection of the overall law which prevails in the valley. (This helps to answer a common American question: how can this gentle and harmony-oriented people resort to violence?)

There is one more point about the valley. Our saints and heroes are in the forefront of the charge at Armageddon, leading us on for what we believe. The saints of the valley, however, are removed; they live in the mountain, from which they sometimes manipulate their disciples in the valley. Most of mankind, however, lives in the valley, having learned to co-exist with good and evil, and to survive by bending with the wind.

When Americans approach a problem, they tend to take it apart, to find out what makes it tick. They break it up into components; they analyze its "good" and "bad" pieces. The Vietnamese approach is conceptual. They take the problem as it exists—they accept it whole—and attempt to connect it to related concepts and problems.

Vietnamese solutions are pragmatic, reached on the basis of practical results. A certain degree of opportunism is acceptable and compromise between good and evil is promoted to "harmonize" conflicting interest—and to save face. In such situations, the Vietnamese (who believe themselves to be non-materialistic) often use money as a salve to reestablish harmony, to redress a disbalance. What counts more than anything else is the harmonization of interests, making everyone reasonably happy but no one totally happy or unhappy. Under this approach, you don't wipe your enemy off the board, because that would create disharmony, which would aggravate and perpetuate rather than solve the problem.

Whenever the action of one person is seen by another individual as arrogant, over aggressive, or disharmonious, the victim loses face—but so does the offending person. Both their families and groups of friends also lose face because they are uncertain of how they should behave. In this period of awkwardness it is difficult to co-exist, or to communicate.

Americans and Vietnamese view leadership and government dif-

# The Harmony Game...

ferently. Americans have institutionalized leadership. We view a position of power as something by itself, and the incumbents move in and out of positions of leadership and power. We give the office of the President—not the person of the President—our loyalty in most cases. Ours is a government of laws; the Vietnamese have a government of men.

It is the man who counts in Vietnam—the man as a total unit. A leader does things for himself and also for the general interest. It is accepted that a person who has power will use his power for himself and his family as well as for the common good, but it is expected that he will harmonize the two demands. He won't deprive his family in order to help his public charges, but he also won't divert anything or everything to the family at the expense of his followers' needs.

Americans use the family as a measurement of progress away from our origins; the American ideal is not to grow up like Daddy. Our real identification is with those who are aligned with us at Armageddon. The Vietnamese, however, conform to the kin group, to the extended family. The extended family includes the nuclear family (mother, father, sisters, brothers) and also all the uncles, aunts and cousins and in-laws, whom Americans tend to discard.

The Vietnamese family also includes grandparents and other ancestors, even though dead. In this context, dead family members aren't quite as dead as they would be in America. Dear old Uncle is still part of the family, even though he passed away last Monday; and the family remains the only unit of permanency in a fluid society. It is the only unit on which the individual can count; the only unit on which he has a permanent claim, and which has a permanent claim on him. It is the only thing to which loyalty is owed always, in a pluralistic world in which shifting one's loyalty at the right time is a measure of wisdom.

For most Vietnamese, the hamlet is where the living family live and the dead family is buried. It is to the hamlet that he gives some of the loyalty which he reserves

for his kin. Vietnamese are slow to form political or other groupings of persons aligned to fight a particular Armageddon. (What they join usually are bands of followers or disciples of a personalistic leader).

Americans who want to communicate effectively with Vietnamese must understand the differences between Vietnamese and American ways of thinking and behaving. By and large Americans

will fail if in a Vietnamese context they use the Armageddon-related patterns of thought and action. In order to be able to "reach" and work with the denizens of the valley of the mainstream of life, Americans must learn the techniques of the harmony-game. Having learned this game, they will then be able to teach their Vietnamese counterparts the action-game, which a growing number of Vietnamese have learned already.

*We are foreigners working in the midst of the Vietnamese cultural system, with its attitudes and behavior patterns...*

[illegible]

BOUNDARY REPRESENTATION IS  
NOT NECESSARILY AUTHORITATIVE

# The Lunar Calendar and Traditional Vietnamese Holidays

From "Connaissance du Vietnam"

by P. Huard and M. Durand

In Vietnam, the year 1964 is also called the year of the Dragon. Nineteen sixty-three was also the year of Cat, nineteen sixty-two, the year of the Tiger, and so on.

We live by two calendars, the Gregorian calendar and the Chinese calendar. While the Gregorian calendar is used in private business and in the government offices, the Chinese calendar governs most of our religious and social life.

The Chinese calendar, adopted by the Vietnamese and most of the Far-Eastern countries, begins in 2637 B. C., in the 61st year of the reign of King Hoang De. The year 1964 of the Gregorian calendar would be the year 4601 of the Sino-Vietnamese calendar. Historical time is divided into «centuries» of sixty years each (sexagesimal cycle or *vạn niên lục giáp*). Each sexagesimal cycle is made up of the combination of two little cycles, one of ten years (*thập can* or ten «celestial» stems), the other of twelve years (*thập nhị chi*, of twelve «terrestrial»

stems . The little cycle, ten years long, is represented by the following ideograms : *giáp, đt, bình, đinh, mậu, kỷ, canh, tân, nhâm, quý*. It is difficult to interpret these terms. Following are a Chinese and a Vietnamese interpretation of them. The Chinese interpretation seems to be the better. Fig.1

The twelve-year cycle reproduces the names of the twelve animals of the zodiac (fig 2). In short, each year, instead of a number, is given two ideograms combined in this way : the ten celestial stems, repeated six times in succession (60) combine one by one with the twelve terrestrial stems repeated five times in succession (60). The celestial stem always precedes the terrestrial stem (fig 2). The year 1924 would be the lunar year *giáp tý*, or year of the Rat. That year being the first of the cycle, there will be no other year bearing that same name till 1984, last year of the cycle and beginning of the next Fig.2

TEN CELESTIAL STEMS	VIETNAMESE INTERPRETATION	CHINESE INTERPRETATION
Giáp Ất	Water (in nature) Water (in the home)	Wood
Bính Đinh	Lighted fire Latent fire	Fire
Mậu Kỷ	Wood in general Wood set to burn	Earth
Canh Tân	Metal in general Wrought metal	Metal
Nhâm Quý	Virgin land Cultivated land	Water

Fig. 1

Another method of counting time consists of counting the years by their order in the reign of a King. Example: the twentieth year of the Reign of Gia Long. This method is convenient for contemporary events but inaccurate when applied to ancient events.

The Sino-Vietnamese calendar is a lunisolar calendar in which the period of twelve lunations (355 days) has been made to agree, from time to time, with the solar year (365 days) by adding a supplementary lunation or intercalary month or 13th

month which occurs every third year and stands between the third and fourth months. Being lunar, the months are twenty nine days and a half long. There are twelve hours in a day, each Sino-Vietnamese hour equalling two Western hours. The hours are named after the twelve terrestrial branches (Rat, Buffalo, Tiger, Cat, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Cock, Dog, Pig). The night is divided into five watches running from 1900 to 0500 hours. The official calendar also indicates auspicious and unauspicious days.

## TRADITIONAL FEASTS

Following is the official calendar of Confucian feasts. Few of these are still widely observed today.

*Đoan Ngọ* (5th day of 5th month)  
*Đông Chí* (winter equinox in 11th month)

*Tam-Nguyên* (15th day of 1st, 7th and 10th month)

*Thất Tịch* (7th night of 7th month)  
*Trung Thu* (mid-autumn festival, 15th day of 8th month)

*Tràng Dương* (9th day of 9th month)

*Tuế Trừ* (end of year)  
*Trừ Tịch* (30th day of 12th month)  
*Xuân Hạp* (spring equinox)

A number of non-Confucian feasts should be added to this list: birth anniversary of Lao-Tse (fifteenth day of second month), anniversary of Quan-Âm (Kwan Yin, nineteenth day of second month) birth of Buddha Amithaba (seventeenth day of eleventh month). We should also include the patron saints' days (*hội thánh*) which are celebrated in each village every few years and the death anniversaries which occur from ten to thirteen times a year.

However, we will confine ourselves to the more important feasts.

*Tết* (*tết Nguyên Đán*), feast of the 1st day of the year or *tết cả*, great feast, is a mobile feast, corresponding to the new moon and placed half-way between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. It lasts from the first to the seventh day of the first month, but there is only a three day holiday for workers, both intellectual and manual. It is the biggest event in the Vietnamese year. On the twenty - third

day of the twelve month, a bamboo pole, five to six metres high, is put up in front of the house. Near the top is hung a bamboo circle to which are attached paper gold bars, a paper carp (*cá chép*) and sonorous tablets of clay (*khánh*). The carp, according to a popular legend, can transform itself into a dragon to serve as mount for the *Ông Táo* (God of the Hearth) in his trip to Heaven, where he reports to the Jade Emperor on the family's activities during the year.

At the same date, the last of the gods of the house triad, (*Thổ địa*), ground god, *Thổ kỳ*, (earth goddess, *Ông Táo* (god of the Hearth), is supposed to go up to

## VẬN NIÊN LỤC GIÁP

<b>THU</b> or <b>TÍ</b> <i>rat</i>	<b>GIÁP TÍ</b> 1804 1864 1924	<b>BÍNH TÍ</b> 1816 1876 1936	<b>MẬU TÍ</b> 1828 1888 1948	<b>CANH TÍ</b> 1840 1900 1960	<b>NHÂM TÍ</b> 1852 1912 1972
<b>NGƯU</b> or <b>SỬU</b> <i>buffalo</i>	<b>ẤT SỬU</b> 1805 1865 1925	<b>ĐINH SỬU</b> 1817 1877 1937	<b>KỶ SỬU</b> 1829 1889 1949	<b>TÂN SỬU</b> 1841 1901 1961	<b>QUỊ SỬU</b> 1853 1913 1973
<b>HỔ</b> or <b>DÂN</b> <i>tiger</i>	<b>BÍNH DÂN</b> 1806 1866 1926	<b>MẬU DÂN</b> 1818 1878 1938	<b>CANH DÂN</b> 1830 1890 1950	<b>NHÂM DÂN</b> 1842 1902 1962	<b>GIÁP DÂN</b> 1854 1914 1974
<b>THỎ</b> or <b>MÃO</b> <i>hare (or cat)</i>	<b>ĐINH MÃO</b> 1807 1867 1927	<b>KỶ MÃO</b> 1819 1879 1939	<b>TÂN MÃO</b> 1831 1891 1951	<b>QUỊ MÃO</b> 1843 1903 1963	<b>ẤT MÃO</b> 1855 1915 1975
<b>LONG</b> or <b>THÌN</b> <i>dragon</i>	<b>MẬU THÌN</b> 1808 1868 1928	<b>CANH THÌN</b> 1820 1880 1940	<b>NHÂM THÌN</b> 1832 1892 1952	<b>GIÁP THÌN</b> 1844 1904 1964	<b>BÍNH THÌN</b> 1856 1916 1976
<b>XÀ</b> or <b>TỊ</b> <i>snake</i>	<b>KỶ TỊ</b> 1809 1869 1929	<b>TÂN TỊ</b> 1821 1881 1941	<b>QUỊ TỊ</b> 1833 1893 1953	<b>ẤT TỊ</b> 1845 1905 1965	<b>ĐINH TỊ</b> 1857 1917 1977
<b>MÃ</b> or <b>NGỌ</b> <i>horse</i>	<b>CANH NGỌ</b> 1810 1870 1930	<b>NHÂM NGỌ</b> 1822 1882 1942	<b>GIÁP NGỌ</b> 1834 1894 1954	<b>BÍNH NGỌ</b> 1846 1906 1966	<b>MẬU NGỌ</b> 1858 1918 1978
<b>DƯƠNG</b> or <b>MÙI</b> <i>goat</i>	<b>TÂN MÙI</b> 1811 1871 1931	<b>QUỊ MÙI</b> 1823 1883 1943	<b>ẤT MÙI</b> 1835 1895 1955	<b>ĐINH MÙI</b> 1847 1907 1967	<b>KỶ MÙI</b> 1859 1919 1979
<b>KHOI</b> or <b>THÂN</b> <i>monkey</i>	<b>NHÂM THÂN</b> 1812 1872 1932	<b>GIÁP THÂN</b> 1824 1884 1944	<b>BÍNH THÂN</b> 1836 1896 1956	<b>MẬU THÂN</b> 1848 1908 1968	<b>CANH THÂN</b> 1860 1920 1980
<b>KÊ</b> or <b>DẬU</b> <i>chicken</i>	<b>QUỊ DẬU</b> 1813 1873 1933	<b>ẤT DẬU</b> 1825 1885 1945	<b>ĐINH DẬU</b> 1837 1897 1957	<b>KỶ DẬU</b> 1849 1909 1969	<b>TÂN DẬU</b> 1861 1921 1981
<b>KHUYEN</b> or <b>TUẤT</b> <i>dog</i>	<b>GIÁP TUẤT</b> 1814 1874 1934	<b>BÍNH TUẤT</b> 1826 1886 1946	<b>MẬU TUẤT</b> 1838 1898 1958	<b>CANH TUẤT</b> 1850 1910 1970	<b>NHÂM TUẤT</b> 1862 1922 1982
<b>TRU</b> or <b>HỢI</b> <i>pig</i>	<b>ẤT HỢI</b> 1815 1875 1935	<b>ĐINH HỢI</b> 1827 1887 1947	<b>KỶ HỢI</b> 1839 1899 1959	<b>TÂN HỢI</b> 1851 1911 1971	<b>QUỊ HỢI</b> 1863 1923 1983

Fig. 2 The six year cycle (vận niên lục giáp) showing the juxtaposition of the great cycle of twelve years (five times) and the lesser cycle of ten years (six times) for the cycles LXXXV (1885-1894), LXXVI (1894-1904), and LXXVII (1904-1914).

the sky for seven days, until the end of the thirtieth day of the twelve month. His absence symbolizes the death of nature during the winter and his return brings its rejuvenation and renewal. Tết is thus a critical date which interrupts the continuity of time and puts rhythm into the life of men and things.

Tết is also a feast of the living and the dead. The first day is reserved for the worship of ancestors; the second for close relatives and the third, also for the dead. All acts performed and all events that take place at the beginning of the new year exert a favorable or unfavorable influence on the future. The first visitor to tread the ground of one's home has to be a happy and prosperous person whose personal luck will benefit the whole house. This also applies to the first outing and to the resumption of all activities which come to life again after the sacred rest and which are celebrated during «opening» ceremonies. The fourth day the government offices reopen, and this day is called *khai đn*, which means, «opening the seals». In the countryside, all work on the soil is forbidden, including any act which would disturb it from its sacred rest. The rites of *động thổ*

proceed to the «activation of the soil», designed to neutralize the divine forces which might be harmful to those who work the land.

The feast of the third day of the third month (*hán thục*) is the feast of cold foods. It is followed sixty days later by *Thanh minh*, the Feast of Pure Clarity, day of the dead filled with the visits and care of the tombs.

The Tết Đoan-ngo, or the fifth day of the fifth month was originally the great feast of the summer solstice. It belongs with the ceremonies at the beginning of summer which, celebrated in the most unhealthy period of the year, aim at warding off epidemics and unfavorable influences. Votive paper and dummies which served as a substitute for the person whom death has already branded are burned: medicines and amulets are bought or prepared.

Tết Trung thu (mid-autumn festival, fifteenth of the eighth month) is the most important feast after the feast of the New Lunar Year. In the struggle between the female principle (*âm*) and the male principle (*dương*), autumn represents the revenge of the former of which the moon is symbol. It's the time



for marriages and engagement ceremonies. It's the time for alternate songs in which boys and girls take part, accompanied by a stringed drum (*trống quân*). One eats moon cakes and cakes with various stuffings. The traditional Lion processions take place at night with lanterns. In each, one sees figurines turning. Those figurines are propelled by hot air produced by a candle or a little oil lamp (*đèn kéo quân*). This is also the feast of the children.

In the company of friends, Vietnamese spend the night conversing, eating and viewing the sky for omens for the next crops.

The feast of the Double-Nine (*Tết Trùng Cửu*), ninth day of ninth month, is also named the feast of *Đông-cao*, or the feast of the Ascension. In old China, people used to pay a visit to the graves, as at the feast of Thanh-Minh (Pure Clarity) and to fly kites. The Empress fasted, purified herself and offered a sacrifice to the spirit of silkworms; she made her way to the garden and plucked mulberry leaves herself. When comes the end of fall, it is the feast of the Double-Nine which coincides with the ninth day of the ninth month. On that day, the female (or cold) principle predominates (*khí âm thịnh lâm*). As

a tradition people went for a walk in the mountains. This feast was most popular with court mandarins, prosperous businessmen and distinguished foreigners from the North; and was seldom celebrated by the common people. Certain persons pick branches of the dogwood tree. The seeds of the Chinese dogwood tree (*ngô thù* or *thù du*) are used in Oriental medicine for coughs or as a tonic. The leaves, if plucked on the 9th of the 9th month, are believed to act effectively against evil influences. In the fall, chrysanthemums are in season. Cultured people enjoyed them in this way: in a garden full of chrysanthemums and lighted with lamps, they sipped chrysanthemum wine, and composed poetry dedicated to autumn. This was at one time regarded as elegant entertainment.

Feast of the Double-Ten (*Tết song thập*). This feast of the tenth day of the tenth month is the last feast of the year; in Buddhist rites, it is called *hạ nguyên*. On this day, the Celestial Court sends to the Earth the Genie of the Three Purenesses to make an investigation about the good and bad deeds of the year; he records everything and makes a full report to the Jade Emperor

(Ngọc-Hoàng). This is why everybody is anxious to have a ceremony in honor of this genie in order to influence him into making a good report. In the same ceremony a cooked meal is offered to the ancestors.

Today, most of the Confucian feasts exist only by name and are not celebrated. Except for *Tết* (3 days off) *Thanh Minh* (1/2 day), they are conspicuously absent from the official holiday calendar.

Among the non-Confucian feasts which have taken their places, the feast of the Ascension, the feast of the Assumption, New Year and Christmas can be listed. So alongside with two Confucian holidays, the modern Vietnamese observes a number of Christian and international holidays. How different they are from the British who are allowed only three holidays in the year : New Year, Christmas and Boxing Day !

Translated from French and  
adapted by N. P. Thien



NOTES AND TRENDS: Vietnamese and American values and preferences  
in administration:

There are cultural differences between the Vietnamese type of administration and that practiced in the United States which may very well prohibit any real long-term success in the United States Vietnamese advisory effort. These differences are primarily a part of the societies from which the two administrative systems evolved. The Vietnamese system stems from the Chinese, with French overtones, and may be characterized as mandarin, authoritarian, and oriented in terms of personal harmony. The American system is hierarchic, impersonal, legalistic, and oriented to achieve action. Vietnamese and Americans have cooperated very well in short-term projects based on technical facts, hardware, and short-term technical instruction. An interchange of mere skills of this sort is easy to achieve..... However, when one reaches that point of development where there has to be an interchange of attitudes and skills involving attitudes, one suspects the Vietnamese are loath to give up their culture-based harmony-oriented system for the more direct action-oriented result-oriented European-American system..... there are attitudinal differences which..... are a hindrance to Vietnamese progress..... particularly in administration and government.

The Vietnamese system evolved from the old Chinese Empire and is largely unchanged in its mores. The Emperor left administration to a group of officials called mandarins. These were chosen on the basis of being men of virtue, selected by examination and generally falling into three ranks. Surprisingly, these ranks, in a later matching of counterparts and personnel ladders of rank and prestige, fell into the European system equivalent to the Bachelor's, the Master's, and the Doctor's degrees. Lesser mandarins were generally relegated to the District. As they advanced in prestige and experience and survived further examinations they could become province mandarins or serve at the Imperial Court. This system is reflected today in the..... "line structure" of the Government of Vietnam. One outstanding characteristic of this system was control in communication downward, and another was veneration or extreme respect for the superior by the inferior. Afterglow from these cultural and moral habits continue today in the government of Vietnam.

Aside from the above discussion of mores in administration, but necessary to understand the present GVN pressures, was the old Vietnamese habit and tradition contained in the saying "The Emperor's law stops at the village hedge". Traditional law and custom practiced in the village, adjudicated and applied by the village council of elders, let the people express themselves and articulate their aspirations to the lowest level of mandarins, and provided a very real measure of self government and self expression in villages and hamlets. This was lost in 1956 when the

Diem government abolished village elected councils. Happily this self government and self expression is being restored by the Ky government in 1967.

Since the mandarin was prepared and schooled for his responsibilities as a ruler by the study of Confucian ethics and the emphasis was upon right-thinking, upon harmony, upon the natural balance of things, there was little administration as it is understood today. Little was done. All was morally (ideologically) guided.

In addition to this strong "line" function, there evolved a system of inspectors-general who represented the Emperor. This function or office has a direct descendant and image in today's GVN "government delegate" in serving to discover inequities and to bring them to the attention of the central government.

Also, Buddhism came to Vietnam, with its concept of "the middle way." This added to traditions of Confucianist harmony, the avoidance of extremes, moderation, inactivity, and above all, "harmony" between persons involved. The outstanding feature of Vietnamese administration even today is this orientation toward compromise for harmony between persons involved. ....

The main innovation by the French was to add to this system a series of ministries and other special-purpose central agencies to achieve certain things technologically: in public works, agriculture, etc. Were one to graph or draw these special-purpose agency additions, one would find them added to the national government as a series of independent or nearly independent fiefdoms, each with its own staff lines and control running out to the Provinces. Even today the province chiefs have little control over these central-ministry field units or offices and can do little more than "coordinate" them within the chief's provincial domain. The government seems like a weeping willow tree, its roots based in the villages and provinces, its trunk line from Saigon (the top of the tree) running via the office of the Prime Minister and the Special Commission for Administration (the former Ministry of Interior) but hundreds of other ministries' dangling branches running from other parts of the top of the tree afloat over, in, but not rooted in, the base (the Provinces and the villages.).....

A recent innovation, born in the pressure of war to survive, is revolutionary development. This system recruits local persons, trains them in special government tasks, returns them to their home areas (provinces, or districts, or even villages), and there they supposedly know the people because they come from there and also supposedly know and render the national government service because they learned it in cadre training. Thus counter insurgency is supposedly achieved, locally, by locals, trained by national specialists. Although there is some thought that revolutionary development will continue in the postwar government and become permanently institutionalized, one cannot but note

that the "regular" government dislikes this "upstart" effort and regards it as ad hoc, to be abolished when peace is achieved.

Other characteristics of GVN officialdom frequently observed by Americans pose problems of understanding too. It is sometimes incomprehensible to Americans that many GVN officials sit at their desks in mandarin dignity and let problems come to them rather than getting out of the office and going "where the action is", in the American manner. It bothers Americans that Vietnamese use the technique of delay and let time solve the problem rather than making a more or less immediate decision.

Another point is that the government of Vietnam has a tradition of strong personal financial responsibility. The last person to put his signature or seal on a piece of financial paper is personally responsible. As a consequence fiscal paper (without which there can be no action) moves slowly.....

Still another cause for wonderment by Americans is the absence of suggestions by inferiors to superiors, the absence of other than laudatory approving responses in "seminars", the absence of questions which are genuinely questions after instruction. In terms of Vietnamese ethics to question means to criticize the boss, to break the rules of harmony between individuals and to embarrass the elder, the authority. To Vietnamese, government relations between officials are personal, such as those between colleagues and friends, such as those between elder brother and younger brother, such as those between sponsor and protege. This enormously inhibits explanation and understanding especially of anything new. This inhibits communication through official channels, and it is an interesting hypothesis that this inhibiting of official channels probably accounts for the enormous interest of Vietnamese officials and individuals (from clerks to top men) in unofficial details about their superiors and inferiors---to a degree which, to Americans, includes much irrelevant and even nosey gossip. The Vietnamese (so runs the hunch, the hypothesis) find it so difficult to ask their superiors or to inform their inferiors through official channels that they must pick (and nitpick) information, relevant or irrelevant, whence and where they can. They too, seek to understand. Successful American advisors are frequently those who supply communication, vertically and horizontally, through talks and more talks via extra unofficial channels. Sometimes the American's main function is that he is an extra channel of communication.

Still another matter few Americans understand is the absence of sanctions against personnel in administration. One does not break another's rice bowl. The Asian will rarely diminish even slightly the ability of another person to make a living. Thus customs stations that have not received an international traveler for 20 years continue manned. Thus useless reports continue to be made and certified and filed. Thus one provides continuing employment---a habit irritating in this present

post-1964 era of full employment in Vietnam and a habit incomprehensible to Americans who have had full employment since 1940. This is in a sense a reflection of village culture where modern comprehensive welfare programs are unknown but where all villagers feel responsible for any one of the village members (but not responsible for any one not a member of the village). This inhibits what we know as "o & m", as "work simplification", as "management analysis", as "cost reduction." Americans accept paying high wages to government workers, but insist that for more money they become more productive (thus training, systems overhaul, mechanization). Asians accept joyously any prospect of a raise in salaries but do not really expect it; but the idea of rendering higher paid workers more useful by upgrading, by training, by mechanical aids, thus not raising total costs on an input-output basis, is more than novel; it is counter-mores.

On the meaning of "face": some insist this is much overrated as an Asian phenomenon or problem. Some say, too, that it is just as much a problem in America as in Vietnam or the next Asian country. The application, however, is different by Americans and by Vietnamese. To Vietnamese and by Vietnamese, it means one assumes courtesy, politeness. Whether the politeness is sincere or merely formal is irrelevant. Americans respect human dignity profoundly, but tolerate, even prefer, personal relations which, to Vietnamese are often brusque, wounding, confusing; which run a range from hearty joking and embarrassing overfamiliarity (to the Vietnamese) to brusque commands and official impersonality which Vietnamese mistake for rudeness and indifference. Thus the way the Vietnamese interprets American official personal relations is a social problem for the American.

Still another problem in Vietnam is the fact that after the Geneva Accords of 1954, many Vietnamese people were qualified to elect French citizenship and leave the country, and did. In terms of skills, much was lost. Beyond this, with the loss of a portion of the educated leadership, the Armed Forces rose in importance as a major unimpaired institutional source of managerial skills to reinforce an already overburdened civil service. This was a social upheaval. The soldier, who didn't even make the four-level social scale of Confucian values, was important. This was counter-mores. It worked. But our point is that it is still counter-mores to many that the soldier and officer replaces the mandarin scholar type. It is still believed profoundly by many Vietnamese to have been an expedient to be ended as soon as possible. Hence demonstrations and endless demands for return to a "civilian" government. Hence friction between civil and military officials on many levels. To Americans, the question is without meaning; we have long civilianized our military and accustomed our civilians, since 1940, to semi-militarization of government.

Another aspect of Vietnamese social, political, and economic organizations which few Americans note, because of their own cultural bias for direct open action, is the covert nature of political and inter-governmental organizations. When an American stumbles on this, he is

frequently repelled. Douglas Pike (in his book VIET CONG: The Organization and Techniques of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, pages 9 and 10) notes how clandestine cliquing operates within formal organizations:

The winner, if he does not take all, takes most and the stakes are high. The world of organizational infighting is fluid and dynamic, in constant flux. One must keep running simply to hold his own. Daily activity involves negotiation and bargaining, sincere and otherwise, partially or completely in secret, and usually through third parties. The world should never know where one stands... No position is ever irretrievable, no commitment ever final... The rule is: be flexible, be changeable, adapt... Loyalty may be a virtue, but consistency is not. (Primary kin group loyalty is an exception). Members assemble around individual leaders rather than around an ideology or a political platform. The best leader is paternalistic, sly, skilled at intrigue, master of the deceptive move, possessor of untold layers of duplicity, highly effective in the world in which he moves. Sagacity in the follower consists of knowing who to join and when, for timing is all important. It is no accident that the Vietnamese hold the professional magician in particular awe....

It is part of acceptable mores, folk lore, in Vietnamese social relations, official and unofficial, that the sly man is more respected than the strong, and that the wise and sly man frequently wins. It is part of acceptable mores, folk lore, in American social relations, official and unofficial, that the sly man is not more respected than the strong, that the sly man does not win and that the truly wise man is above being sly.

It is evident that cultural and attitudinal bridges are needed. Vietnamese administrators have as much difficulty communicating concepts and ideas to Americans as Americans have communicating them to Vietnamese. Indeed, in cases of good rapport between advisors and advised, one wonders which is which, which is learning and which is teaching. The answer probably is that both are, and that both American advisor and Vietnamese advisee are advisor and advisee, and that each is becoming somewhat like the other in attitudes, in values and preferences concerning the project, the program, the things to be done.

It is also evident that given the cultural and attitudinal gaps, in the cases of successful rapport, the Vietnamese (given his basic orientation toward "harmony") will do the greater part of the accommodation. This might, as any social psychologist would conjecture, produce a slight feeling of uneasiness and perhaps guilt. He may sense that somehow he is being un-Vietnamese. He may develop occasional withdrawal symptoms. Or he may delay, to think it over again. His administrative decisions are therefore frequently slow and faltering, unnecessarily delayed--to the American waiting on them.

One of the benefits of Western civilization, particularly a benefit coming from the United States, is the point of view, the mores

and attitudes, that one can work in the realm of the possible, that it is today that counts, that it is the knowledge of the engineer, rather than that of the philosopher or theoretician that counts; that in applying basic knowledge to more and more phenomena and problems one can achieve multiple increases in benefits in goods, gifts, services, work done, and troubles removed. There have not been any great scientific managers in Asian countries. Put another way, classical Chinese civilization inhibited the industrial revolution and produced a good deal more in the way of chrysanthemum painting than in machine-made textiles. The American basic idea is action. Abraham Hirsch says that we get quite moral about "doing something":

The American bureaucrat...structures his workday as a series of aggressive actions to be taken in the course of his working hours. As he walks to work in the morning, he is thinking: "At eight o'clock ...I will call Joe and give him hell...at eight thirty I will go to that meeting--and I will fight hard for my view of the problem.... The door-to-door salesman, too, structures his day in a like manner: a series of actions, of good fights. To the American and to other action-oriented people, life is a series of "Armageddons", major and minor, daily to be waged in an unending sequence of actions designed to make good triumph--to assure the success of whatever we have selected as being our "good".

"Daily to be waged": Another illustration, from play: An audience of Texans was watching a ball game. Their favorite committed an error, dropped the ball, and let a run score. They booed him mercilessly. Someone observed that just the day before, in another game, they had cheered him wildly when he hit a home run. A Texan replied: "They were right to boo him. It's today that counts".

Americans by and large tend to leave the discovery of the true right way of life, of the philosophic great earth-shaking ideas, to Europeans (and historically to Asians). But they go on, on, on, making tens of thousands of useful, delightful applications of accepted established ideas: the result, in American factories, armed units, government offices, everywhere, is action, results. This does things. It changes things. It upsets equilibria. It disturbs traditions, it dissolves the "cake of custom" everywhere it reaches, and it reaches almost everywhere. And it is hard on a people whose central organizing idea is to persevere and search for "natural harmony".....

(Excerpts from "Games We Play," a  
think piece by ADPA, USAID)



UNITED STATES ARMY INSTITUTE FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE

INTERNAL CONFLICT

4091  
Jul 74

FOURTH STUDENT REQUIREMENT - SHORT PAPER

INCLOSURE FOUR to Appendix One to Advance Sheet

1. REFERENCES:

a. SOP, Evaluation of FAOC Students, dated 4 January 1974.

b. Advance Sheets and Appendices to Advance Sheets 4091, 94, and 99, Internal Conflict Instruction.

2. GENERAL: This inclosure provides specific guidance for the preparation of the short paper to be written on Internal Conflict.

3. BACKGROUND: The Internal Conflict block of instruction is intended to provide the FAO with a working appreciation of the manifold variables which affect the level of conflict in a society. In addition, the officer should be able to develop a systematic approach to analyzing conflict in a specific area. The short paper focuses on these pertinent variables and on each student's ability to conceptualize his own framework for analysis in a systematic manner.

4. STUDENT REQUIREMENT: Develop a framework for analysis and employ it using an approved country. This approval will be obtained by your Seminar Director.

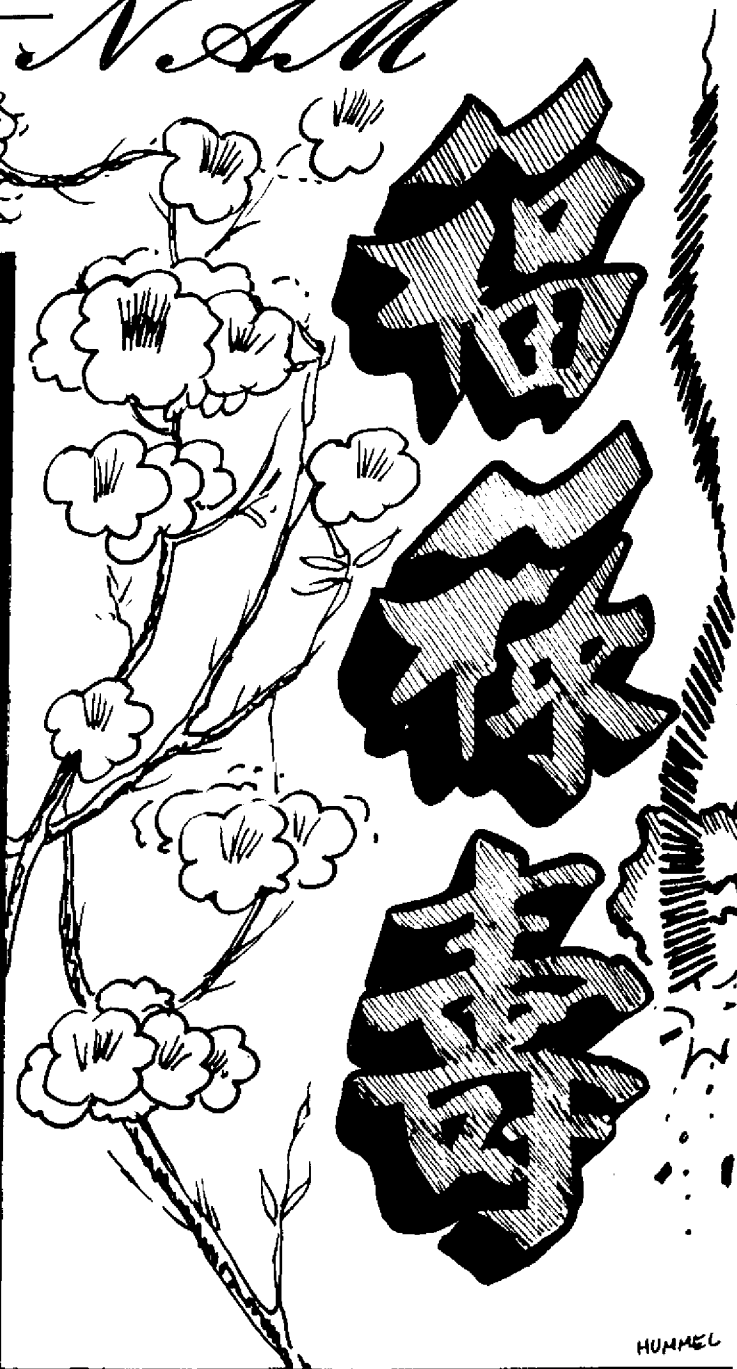
The title of the paper should be:

"AN ANALYSIS OF THE POTENTIAL FOR INTERNAL CONFLICT:  
THE CASE OF \_\_\_\_\_."

Papers should not exceed 15 pages and must be submitted through your Seminar Director.

# TẾT

*VIỆT-NAM*



HUMMEL

February 1969

NAVY PERSONAL RESPONSE OFFICE  
U. S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, SAIGON  
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96626

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TET

A NEW YEAR FOR VIETNAM

WHAT IS TET ?

TET is Vietnam's most important holiday. TET is a touching mixture of gaiety and serious thought, of remembrances of the past and hopes for the future, of concern about the living and the dead. It is a family reunion, a spring festival, a national holiday and everybody's birthday. The Vietnamese have been celebrating TET for many centuries. It was taught to them by the Chinese, but the Vietnamese have transformed it into a distinct national holiday. Its main features have not changed, even during the last twenty years which have witnessed a long and arduous war.

TET - AN OCCASION FOR MERRY-MAKING

TET is an occasion for everyone to have fun, even for those who can hardly afford to. To the Vietnamese, TET would be inconceivable without excessive eating and drinking. Some people spend all their previous year's savings on celebrating TET. Just as the Western World has traditional foods for Christmas, the Vietnamese have their "bánh chưng" ( a delicious pudding made with rice and fruits), and rice brandy (rượu đế). A variety of traditional cookies and jams are also TET delicacies.

TET would also be unthinkable without new clothes. This applies even to those who have got far more clothes than they actually need. Since the New Year means a new lease on life, one cannot do without new clothes. Children are given the most bright colored clothes possible. It has also become a tradition to give money to children so that they can freely purchase the things they desire. Toys are very seldom given on this occasion. Money gifts are enclosed in a special red envelope. Gifts to adults are not necessary. For children up to fifteen and all unmarried people, a small red envelope has a very

special significance. To make a real impression, one should write on it: "CUNG CHÚC TÂN XUÂN" which means "Many wishes for the New Spring".

### TET - AN OCCASION FOR THINKING

TET is an occasion when people have a good and hard look at their spiritual lives. They assess their past deeds, seek forgiveness for their wrong doings and seek to promote mutual understanding with their friends and families. This is why everyone visits pagodas or churches during TET, and gives money to beggars or make generous contributions to their churches' funds. They try to forget their enmities and hatreds and be on perfectly friendly terms with everyone else, even with their enemies - it is time for complete tolerance. On the New Year, one has to be most courteous, most forgiving, most generous, in short most gentlemanly or ladylike, though one may not intend to be so in the course of the year.

### TET - AN OCCASION TO RECALL THE PAST

During TET the Vietnamese pay tribute to the nation's saints. It is to be noted that all of Vietnam's saints are war heroes. Since war has become a way of life here, the most important saints (or more properly war heroes) to be revered during TET are Marshall Trần-Hùng-Đạo, King Quang-Trung etc... the country's history and its heroes are discussed in family circles during TET.

### TET - HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

During TET, the Vietnamese make plans for their future. Each has his own dream, each expects their life in the coming year will be better than the last. In order to be sure of the "rightness" of their plans, people consult astrologers and fortune tellers. Some of these pocket enough money to live on the rest of the year.

### TET - A LINK BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

The basis of Vietnamese society is the family including the living and the dead, ascendants and descendants, relatives and neighbors, friends and acquaintances. And the essential character of TET is to lay stress upon that foundation by honoring one's ancestors and parents, receiving respects from one's children, visiting and giving best wishes to one's relatives and friends.

Thus TET is an occasion to work out plans to promote happiness and riches for one's family members and relatives in death. In the eyes of the Vietnamese, death is not necessarily an end to everything, but only a passage from one world to another, and both worlds are believed to be only two successive phases of man's life.

TET is also an occasion to pray for peace, for freedom of the nation health and social position for oneself and one's people.

### HOW TET IS CELEBRATED TODAY?

"Fat meat, salted onions and red parallels \*  
Bamboo pole, firecrackers and green rice cakes"

"Thịt mỡ, dưa hành câu đối đỏ  
Cây nêu, pháo tét, bánh chưng xanh"

\* Two panels on vertical parallel pillars at entrance to house.

This is a scholar's parallel sentences, through which he expressed how people celebrated TET in the old Vietnamese society. In the war-time, the celebration of TET is simplified although the customs are still there. Every year people continue to spend millions of piasters for their celebration of TET.

The first TET ceremonies begin during the night of the 29th or 30th day of the 12th lunar month. In fact, preparations for TET begin weeks before the actual event. People start to decorate their houses, purchase firecrackers, tailor new clothes, cook special dishes and also stock food because a "general strike" will occur during TET.

Months before TET, businessmen get ready for a big selling season. Items in greatest demand are foods, clothes, gifts, candles and flowers. The last 3 or 4 days before the birth of a new year, the crowds are even more dense, the uproar noisier and smiling shoppers jam the shops. The central market is hectic. Suddenly this excitement is extinguished like magic, the mountains of fruit disappear, shops are closed, streets empty and the tumult diminishes. At once the town is deserted and remains lifeless for three days. The shops are closed, sidewalks are empty and seem to be reserved for a few persons strolling in their new clothes. When the first hour of the new year comes, one must be at home, in front of the altar to welcome the New Spring.

TET begins with "GIAO THUA" a midnight ceremony which marks the transition of one year to another. The purpose of celebrating "Giao Thua" is two fold: to thank the outgoing Spirit who reports to the celestial authorities and welcomes his successor and also invites ancestors to participate with their family. Thus during this season, the Vietnamese enjoy many dishes they do not prepare at any other time of year.

Firecrackers, the Unicorn dance, Water melon, Apricot flowers and many other kinds of flower are symbolic of TET.

TET without firecrackers and apricot flowers would not be TET at all. According to people's thoughts, firecrackers and apricot flowers are the soul of TET itself. Without firecrackers and apricot flowers TET is like a reception without a speech. People say: "Firecrackers are the Ambassadors of Queen Spring. They announce a good beginning on the first day of the year". Firecrackers symbolize gaiety and are a pleasure for people of all ages, from all walks of life. Apricot blossom are a symbol of spring and peace.

With the passage of time, the purpose of exploding firecrackers has changed from chasing away evil spirits to producing as much noise and enjoyment as possible. Every year, people spend millions of piasters, which go up in smoke through the explosion of countless firecrackers. When the New Year is approaching, everybody prepares for TET with all of their eagerness and seem willing to forget enmities, hatreds, and ready to welcome a New Spring.

### WHAT SHOULD A VISITOR DO OR NOT DO

#### DURING TET ?

TET is a fine time to make friends among the Vietnamese people. If you are invited to visit a Vietnamese house, don't refuse the invitation. Remember that visits are an important part of the Vietnamese TET celebration. The superstition is that people pay an unusual amount of attention to what happens during those three first day.

Don't be a first visitor to the house. In the morning of the New Year's first day, people worry about who will be the first visitor to the house. It is believe that the destiny of the whole family for the entire

year will depend on him. So, if you are invited for the first day of TET, plan to arrive in the afternoon.

Don't give gifts such as: Medicines, sharp objects or anything used.

Arguments, violent emotions or insults should be avoided during the TET period.

Do not discuss unpleasant things during the TET with Vietnamese.

Do not break dishes.

Do not be insulting

Do not display grief

Do not refuse to eat what your host offers you .

Avoid wearing black or white clothing and other mourning attire.

Avoid asking for fire (for cooking)

Avoid asking for the payment of debts.

Do send greeting cards. They should arrive before the first day of TET. Any received after that date might be viewed as insincere. When you wish your host "Happy TET" it is meaningless, you should say something like "I wish you a prosperous and happy New Year" "TÔI CHÚC ÔNG (BÀ, CÔ, EM) PHÁT TÀI VÀ HẠNH PHÚC TRONG NĂM MỚI".

In greeting a married woman you can say: "I hope that next year you will have a (another) boy". "TÔI CHÚC BÀ SẼ CÓ THÊM MỘT CHÁU TRAI (NỮ) TRONG NĂM MỚI.

Do give children and unmarried people a red envelope with money placed inside. Write on it: "CUNG CHÚC TÂN XUÂN" which means "Many wishes for the New Spring"

Do pay taxi and cyclo drivers double fares.

Try to use military transportation during TET to allow Vietnamese the maximum use of whatever public transportation is available.

## THE BASIC SENTENCES OF NEW YEAR' WISHES

Most Vietnamese living in cities and some people in rural area send New Year's Card to their friends and relatives. These cards are posted approximately ten days before New Year's Day and make sure that the addresses get them during the holidays. The cards are nicely printed with picture of flowers, birds, pretty women etc... and you can write a proper greeting would be something like:

"CUNG CHUC TÂN XUÂN" which means "Many wishes for the New Spring"

"KINH CHUC MOT NAM MOI AN VUI VA THINH VUONG"  
"I wish you a happy and prosperous New Year"

There are hundreds of manner of wishes for New Year depending on the situation, personal desire, profession, circumstance ... such as:

"NAM MOI CHUC ONG (BA, CO) VAN SU NHU Y"  
"I wish that all things happen as your desire"

"CHUC ONG (CO) THANH CONG TREN DUONG HOC VAN"  
"I wish you much success in your education"

"CHUC ONG (BA, CO) NAM NAY MUA MAY BAN DAT, TIEN TAI NHU NUOC"  
"I wish that your business may proper with the New Year and that money flows into your house like water".

"KINH CHUC ONG (BA, CO) MOT NAM MOI DOI DAO SUC KHOE, VUI TUOI VA HANH PHUC"  
"I respectfully wish you much happiness, joy and good health in the New Year".

"CHUC BA DAU NAM SINH CON TRAI, CUOI NAM SINH CON GAI"  
"I wish you to have a boy at the beginning of the year and a girl at the end of the year".

"THAN CHUC BAN MOT MUA XUAN NHU Y VA TUOI NHU HOA HONG"  
"Best wishes for a happy spring as bright as a rose"



## NEW YEAR'S DAY AROUND THE WORLD

Perhaps the single most important holiday celebrated throughout the world is that of "The New Years". It is a universal time of hope and promise. It marks the end of the old and the beginning of the new.

First celebrated around 2600 B.C. by the Bablyonians in a twelve day feast, it is now a time of joyous merrymaking and solemn religious services. From this celebration came one of the oldest customs associated with the New Year, that of noisemaking. The practice is said to have come from Bablyon and India. Today the din that issues from Time Square in New York as the clock strikes midnight is a relic of the past when such noise served a useful function. Much is made of happenings and events on the first day of the New Year. They are the indicators of the type of year that lies ahead, according to the beliefs of many people. In Scotland if one meets a beggar or a person with empty arms on the first day it is a forewarning of ill fortune. In Germany it is considered harmful if the candles or lights go out on the first day. In Lancashire, England, to share a lighted match with another will surely bring harm. In Spain as long as a person has money in his pocket (especially a gold coin) he will never lack for cash in the coming months.

Calling on relatives and renewing friendships in an excepted part of the occasion. Family reunions play an important part in the celebration in many of the Christain countries. An old Scottish custom of calling on friends takes place form 12:00 PM to 1:00AM. The first one through the door to greet a family at this time is considered an indicator of the families fortunes in the coming year. Prospective bridegrooms try always to be first.

In America many people prefer to celebrate the coming Holiday in hotels and cafes or at parties in private homes. Dinner is served and a party atmosphere prevails until midnight. Then the lights are momentarily turned off. Everyone then exchanges best wishes and songs associated with the occasion are sung. Afterwards the festivities are resumes and may last the rest of the night. Such is common in many European countries.

In many countries and especially the United States, the first day of the New Year is a time of parades, football games and general merrymment. In France gifts and greeting cards are exchanged and shop owners usually

send something to their best patrons. German boys and girls carry presents to their teachers on the first day, apples in some cases. While gifts are given to servants, postmen and janitors.

In some parts of India lemons are used for gifts, while in Persia (Iran) eggs symbolizing the beginning of life, are exchanged. Many Dutch children hurry from their beds to be the first to shout "Happy New Year" to their parents. On this day, bachelor uncles, or grandfathers, give money to their small relatives, while all enjoy a gala dinner together.

New Year in all parts of the world is a time of happiness and universal good will. It is a time to begin again the tasks that lie ahead. In all celebrations there is inspired the hope that springs eternal in man.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
U. S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, SAIGON  
FPO, SAN FRANCISCO 96626

Series C-2

TET SCHEDULE  
SUGGESTIONS

The PRE-TET parties are usually held at offices on the convenient day in order to give one another a chance to get together before they leave for TET. These parties should be held within four days prior to TET.

TET - From 0000, 17 February through 19 February:

16 FEB - The day before TET, which commences at 2400:

Employees should be released as early as possible and at least before noon. If their home town or city is some distance away their release should provide ample time to reach their home by mid-day.

Gifts for employees can consist of: Candy, cigarettes, whiskey, beer, coke or similar equivalent gifts and should be given a few days before TET.

Gifts for children should normally be about 40\$VN and not more than 100\$VN (all new bills) and given in a small red envelope. They should be presented when you visit them at home. To laborers, drivers and maids, who have low salaries, an additional money gift should be given.

NOTE: Gifts indicated above should be collectively given by all staff members and only one appropriate gift to each employee from all staff members is necessary.

17 FEB - Family Day:

This day is primarily a family day. Most Vietnamese will attend Church services (Buddhist, Catholic, Protestant, etc...) at midnight followed by a celebration in the early morning at home. In the morning hours, up until at least noon, visiting is done by families and relatives. American personnel should not visit Vietnamese on this day unless specifically invited, and then in no case before 1200.

18-19 FEB - Fireworks:

If a visit is planned, firecrackers are normally given at this time but have been banned this year.

20 FEB - First work day after TET:

The first day of work after TET is quite important due to the influence the events of this day are thought to have on one's luck the remainder of the year. Everyone should be particularly careful to be cheerful on this day. Remember that most employees will be visiting about the office areas to exchange New Year Greetings.

NOTE: If you desire to send TET Cards, they should be mailed. Normally for Americans, cards should be sent only to those people that you won't be able to greet personally. Normally, every effort should be made not to discharge a person during the first month of TET as it is thought to bring bad luck for the rest of the year.

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VIET CONG

## GLOSSARY OF COUNTERINSURGENCY TERMS

**CIVIC ACTION**--is any action performed by military forces of a country, utilizing military manpower and skills, in cooperation with civil agencies, authorities, or groups, that is designed to improve the economic or social betterment of that country.

**CLANDESTINE OPERATION**--activities to accomplish intelligence, counter-intelligence, and other similar activities sponsored or conducted by governmental departments or agencies, in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment.

**COLD WAR**--a state of international tension, wherein political, economic, technological, sociological, psychological, paramilitary, and military measures short of overt armed conflict involving regular military forces are employed to achieve national objectives.

**COUNTERGUERRILLA WARFARE**--operations and activities conducted by armed forces, paramilitary forces, or nonmilitary agencies of a government against guerrillas.

**COUNTERINSURGENCY**--those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat subversive insurgency.

**COUNTERINTELLIGENCE**--that aspect of intelligence activity which is devoted to destroying the effectiveness of inimical foreign intelligence activities and to the protection of information against espionage, individuals against subversion, and installation or material against sabotage.

**COVERT OPERATIONS**--operations which are so planned and executed as to conceal the identity of or permit plausible denial by the sponsor. They differ from clandestine operations in that emphasis is placed on concealment of identity of sponsor rather than on concealment of the operation.

**EVASION AND ESCAPE (E&E)**--the procedures and operations whereby military personnel and other selected individuals are enabled to emerge from an enemy-held or hostile area to areas under friendly control.

**GUERRILLA**--a combat participant in guerrilla warfare.

**GUERRILLA WARFARE (GW)**--military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy-held or hostile territory by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces.

**INSURGENCY**--a condition resulting from a revolt or insurrection against a constituted government which falls short of civil war. In the current context, subversive insurgency is primarily communist inspired, supported, or exploited.

INTERNAL DEFENSE--the full range of measures taken by a government to protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.

INTERNAL FORCES--refer in a broad sense to all types of insurgents to include, for example, partisans, subversionists, terrorists, revolutionaries, and guerrillas.

INTERNAL SECURITY--the state of law and order prevailing within a nation.

MILITARY CIVIC ACTION--the use of preponderantly indigenous military forces on projects useful to the local population at all levels in such fields as education, training, public works, agriculture, transportation, communications, health, sanitation and others contributing to economic and social development, which would also serve to improve the standing of the military forces with the population. (US forces may at times advise or engage in military civic actions in overseas areas.)

PARAMILITARY OPERATION--an operation undertaken by a paramilitary force.

PARAMILITARY FORCES--forces or groups which are distinct from the regular armed forces of any country, but resembling them in organization, equipment, training, or mission.

PROPAGANDA--any information, ideas, doctrines, or special appeals in support of national objectives, designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any specified group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly.

BLACK--Propaganda which purports to emanate from a source other than the true one.

GREY--Propaganda which does not specifically identify any source.

WHITE--Propaganda disseminated and acknowledged by the sponsor or by an accredited agency thereof.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE--the planned use of propaganda and other psychological actions having the primary purpose of influencing the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of hostile foreign groups in such a way as to support the achievement of national objectives.

RESISTANCE MOVEMENT--is an organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power.

SUBVERSION--action designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological, morale, or political strength of a regime.

SPECIAL WARFARE--is a term used by the U. S. Army to embrace all the military and paramilitary measures and activities related to unconventional warfare, counterinsurgency, and psychological warfare.

U. S. ARMY COUNTERINSURGENCY FORCES--comprise special forces, civil affairs, psychological warfare, engineer, medical, light aviation, signal, and other elements as required. They are capable of operating in disturbed areas, if invited by a host government, to provide training and operational advice and assistance to indigenous military forces engaged in maintaining or restoring internal security.

U. S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES GROUPS--are especially trained and organized to train and assist indigenous leaders and forces in measures, tactics, and techniques required to prevent or eliminate hostile resistance and guerrilla groups.



APPENDIX TO  
GLOSSARY OF COUNTERINSURGENCY TERMS

BLIND TERRORISM - Designed primarily to attract publicity and supporters, and to spread insecurity.

CADRE - Designates any member of an insurgent force who occupies a position of leadership in the political or military structure which would be the military equivalent of Squad leader or above.

COMMUNIST-RESISTENT MASS BASE - Prime requisite in countering a War of Liberation, in developing through progressive reform a large base of public support for the Nation's government.

INTERNAL WARFARE - The use of force within national boundaries, rather than across them.

LIBERATED ZONE - The term used by the insurgents for the areas under their control.

PACIFICATION EFFORT - The total military, political, economic, and social process of developing or redeveloping a popular and responsive government in areas recovered from insurgent control; the process in which a Communist-resistant mass base is being developed or attempted.

SELECTIVE or INCOHERENT TERRORISM - Used to control the population and to promote instability.

SUBVERSION AGAINST HOSTILE STATES - That part of unconventional warfare comprising action by underground resistance groups for purposes of reducing the military, economic, psychological or political potential of the enemy. As resistance groups develop strength, their actions may become overt and their status shift to that of a guerrilla force.

WAR OF LIBERATION - An insurgency, usually Communist-supported and led, claiming to aim at driving out a foreign or foreign-dominated government of a developing nation; uses Maoist-type guerrilla warfare techniques as an alternative to traditional general warfare.

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY  
OFFICE OF POLICY AND RESEARCH

RESEARCH SERVICE

THE VIET CONG: THE FRONT TECHNIQUE

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#### ABSTRACT

This report analyzes the Communist strategy of subversion, conquest and control of South Vietnam through the use of Lenin's united front technique and two stage revolution. The report shows how the Communist Party, under Hanoi control, directs the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam through a network of front associations reaching down into the hamlet level. The information in the report was derived from captured Viet Cong documents, prisoner interrogation reports and published studies of the use of the front technique in North Vietnam and elsewhere.

## SUMMARY

The Liberation Front for South Vietnam represents an effort by Vietnamese Communists to repeat the front technique by which their Viet Minh Front defeated France. The front technique, developed by Lenin as part of his two-stage revolution leading to Communist rule, offers the Communists many organizational and propaganda advantages for the first or liberal democratic stage of their revolution. After failing in early efforts to subvert Diem's government, Hanoi greatly increased its aid to the South Vietnamese Communists and ordered the creation of the Liberation Front and a southern branch of the Party.

The program of the Front sounds democratic, but contains buried clauses to provide for a Party "takeover for the people." The Front is controlled throughout by a parallel Party structure. The front technique relies on the use of Party created mass associations, manipulated through the use of crowd psychology by open and secret Party members who hold key positions at each level.

## THE VIET CONG: THE FRONT TECHNIQUE

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This is the third and last of a series of reports presenting a profile of the Viet Cong across a broad spectrum of organizations, tactics, activities, motivations, types, etc. The previous reports were The Viet Cong: Patterns of Communist Subversion (R-8-66, January 1966) and The Viet Cong: The Communist Party and Cadre (R-74-66, April 1966).

## THE VIET CONG: THE FRONT TECHNIQUE

### THE STRATEGY

The creation of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam represents an effort by the Vietnamese Communists to repeat their classic success in using the front technique which won them North Vietnam. A revealing editorial in the September 1966 issue of the Vietnamese Communist Party's theoretical journal, Hoc Tap, boasted of the Party's past successes in using the front technique:

The policy of founding the Indochinese Democratic Front between 1936 and 1939, the Viet Minh Front between 1941 and 1951, and the Lien Viet Front; the decision of signing the 6 March 1946 preliminary accord; the present Liberation Front policy of upholding the mottoes of independence, peace and neutrality, and so forth -- all these are typical examples of the clever application of the following instructions of Lenin; "It is possible to defeat a stronger enemy only through displaying great effort and under the necessary conditions of taking advantage -- very minutely, very attentively, very carefully, and very cleverly -- of any rift, even the smallest one among the enemy; taking advantage of any contradiction, even the smallest one, among the interest of the bourgeoisie of various countries and among the bourgeois groups and factions of each country; as well as taking advantage of any possibility, even the smallest one, of winning over an ally who is numerically strong -- even though this ally is temporary ... uncertain, unstable and unreliable." Anyone who does not understand this truth understands neither Marxism nor scientific socialism in general.

The front technique thus is not new. It is part of the strategy of the two-stage revolution -- the liberal democratic revolution followed by the socialist revolution -- conceived by Lenin and developed by Stalin, Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi Minh. The Communists see the second stage revolution as bringing a transfer of power to the workers and peasants under the leadership of their "vanguard" the Communist Party. The first stage of the revolution is necessary, according to Communist theory, because the socialist revolution can occur only after feudalism and colonialism have been overthrown by a nationalist bourgeois-democratic revolution. Since the bourgeoisie were able and willing to work for a liberal democratic and nationalist revolution, Lenin proposed that the Party should join forces with them to accelerate and guide what Communists consider an inevitable historical development. The Communists believe they can safely use the intellectuals and leaders of the bourgeoisie because they are "blind deaf mutes," incapable of understanding the Party's completely cynical use of the united front, the fellow traveller and the big lie in their non-traditional warfare.

As a form of non-traditional warfare, the united front is intended to carry on the Party's class struggle over a broad range of political, psychological, cultural, economic and conspiratorial methods. Ultimately, however, the Party views the front as a projection and a support for its armed forces. Non-violent and violent methods are interconnected in Communist non-traditional warfare, the one supporting the other. The Party uses peaceful tactics when they are productive but is ever ready to back peaceful front tactics with protracted conflict ranging from terror through guerrilla war to conventional warfare. Yet, even while using force, it is supported by non-violent activities -- demonstrations, propaganda campaigns, psychological warfare tactics, both at the scene of the conflict and world-wide through interconnected fronts and fellow travelling networks.

As used in accelerating and guiding the liberal democratic stage of the two stage revolution, the united front technique serves several functions. It enables a numerically weak Communist party to:

1. Divert to its own ends the nationalist and democratic aspirations of the bourgeoisie and other non-Communist or even anti-Communists.
2. Divide and control such groups by exploiting special interest factions and organizing and manipulating them in specialized front associations.

3. Provide a facade of a nation-wide coalition with a purportedly democratic administration behind which the Party works to assert total dictatorial control over the people.

4. Confuse and exploit international public opinion and divide possible foreign opposition by making a Communist led revolution appear to have nationalist and democratic goals.

It was by combining the advantages of this technique together with liberal material aid from Communist China that the Vietnamese Communists gained control of North Vietnam and ousted the colonial rule of France.

Guided by veteran Communist Party organizer, Ho Chi Minh, the Indochinese Communist Party created the Viet Minh as a united front during World War II. The avowed purpose of this coalition of anti-French parties and groups was to drive out the French and to create an independent and democratic Vietnamese government. Contemporary Communist documents make clear the Party's real strategy was to use any group it could use to achieve Communist ends while avoiding being used by others.

After the surrender of Japan, the Viet Minh proclaimed independence in terms tailored by Ho Chi Minh to resemble the United States Declaration of Independence. Subsequently a constituent assembly was selected in elections carefully rigged to assure Party control while placating the leading anti-Communist political parties. Under close Communist control, this assembly wrote a liberal and democratic constitution intended to attract broad support from nationalists. This document remained largely dead-letter as the Party steadily strengthened its control over the Front and the Viet Minh government.

From 1945 onward, the Party gradually eliminated or intimidated its opponents. Many anti-Communist leaders and even Trotskyites were assassinated or executed by Viet Minh "people's courts" on charges trumped up by Party cadres. By temporarily pretending to cooperate with the French, the Party used French forces to help destroy the main anti-Communist nationalist forces. The elections called for in the 1946 constitution were never held. The constituent assembly continued a nominal existence without formal change, but it rarely met. Assemblymen who asked embarrassing questions disappeared.

Thus, while using the banner of democracy and nationalism to attract popular support for a "war of liberation," the Communists were busily murdering nationalist and democratic leaders and were organizing the peasants into Communist controlled "Peoples



Committees" and "Liberation" or "National Salvation" front associations. By the time the Party gained unquestioned control over the North by the Geneva Truce terms in 1954, the Communists totally dominated the Viet Minh regime. Then completing the betrayal of all its promises to the people and to the democratic and nationalist allies who had fought against the French, the Party launched the socialist stage of the revolution. This move was preceded by destruction of the traditional leadership groups in a massive purge in the population classification and "agrarian reform" movements.

By the population classification movement, the population was artificially subdivided into "classes" according to wealth and occupation. The more prosperous were stripped of their wealth which was distributed to the poor. Former leaders of the agricultural and business communities were "punished" by execution, imprisonment and forced labor for trumped-up "crimes against the people." They and their families were reduced to abject poverty without hope of betterment. This blood-bath got out of Party control. As Party agitators harassed the villagers into making public accusations at "peoples courts" in which the peasants were assembled to serve at the same time as prosecuting attorney, jury and judge, some villagers began to settle old scores and made accusations against Party men. Before the purge was dampened, thousands of Party cadre were killed and imprisoned along with landlords and other "culprits."

The excesses of the purge touched off a wave of public criticism coinciding with the "hundred flowers" movement in China. For a time the Party encouraged criticisms and relaxed censorship. Then as these threatened to tear apart the Party, the Party used its power and organizational devices to quiet the intellectuals who had led the criticisms. Those who had exposed their anti-Party views were in turn criticized, humiliated and finally "re-educated" by forced labor and indoctrination schools.

The population classification movement was the Communist's solution to the problem of effecting a class revolution in a society that has never had distinct class barriers. In Vietnam it has always been possible, although difficult, for a poor boy to rise through shrewdness, education and hard work. Most Vietnamese families have relatives at several economic levels. Wealth and position gained by one generation does not guarantee high status for their descendants who sink back into the original poor status once that wealth or position is gone.

To carry out a class revolution in this environment, the Communists arbitrarily classify all people according to wealth, occupation or income or that of their parents. Four classes -- workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and middle or "national" bourgeoisie -- are considered worthy of joining the united front. Excluded from the Front are the "feudalists," or wealthy landlords, the "comprador" capitalists, who are the larger businessmen and industrialists connected with foreign trade, and those who support the government. These groups are branded as hopelessly reactionary "lackeys of the American imperialists," to be annihilated during the "war of liberation" in the first stage of the revolution.

The Party places the most faith in the poorest peasants and workers whom they consider most susceptible to the promises of the Communists. Lesser bourgeoisie and prosperous peasants are eligible to join the Liberation Front but they are not fully trusted until they have proven their devotion to the revolution. Lesser landlords are classed as "national" bourgeoisie who are permitted to join the Front so they can be used and controlled. While the Party aims to "indoctrinate and guide" these landlords "in the anti-American struggle," this is to be done "without creating the illusion of admitting them into the Party," since this would be "rightest." Party organizers are told that "although we do not attack all landlords, we must attack them bit by bit and gradually deprive them of their economic and political privileges." While using the landlords in the Front, the Party aims at the same time to "neutralize and isolate" them. Party directives warn that "the struggle against the landlords must go on in complete secrecy," for the immediate goal is to "promote solidarity and increase agricultural production to kill the enemy."

One Party document states succinctly that it is the strategy of the Front to "rely on poor farmers and lower middle class, to ally with the wealthy farmers, to disorganize the landlord class to the utmost, to neutralize nonaligned persons and to isolate and annihilate wicked tyrants [i.e. government officials, "feudalists" "comprador" capitalists and their supporters]."

To draw together such varied elements as tenants, landlords, workers and employers into a united front, the Party designs the Front program to give it the widest possible appeal. For general audiences, slogans promising national democracy, economic progress and industrialization, social justice and agrarian reform are advanced. These slogans need have no relevance to true Communist goals or intentions and each is interpreted differently to each interest group. The landlord is told that agrarian reform only involves lower rents for which he will be compensated by more

honest and efficient government and lower taxes. Into the ear of his poor tenants, the Party agitator whispers that agrarian reform eventually means "land to the tiller" and "kill the landrobber."

Vietnamese Communist leaders are proud of their ability to deceive, confuse and divide their "enemy" by such tactics. The September Hoc Tap editorial cited before summarized the Party's achievements:

... our Party cleverly applies its tactics. On the one hand it shrewdly took advantage of the regional and temporary contradictions of the enemy to sow division among them. On the other hand, it united with anyone who could be united, won over anyone who could be won over, neutralized anyone who could be neutralized, completely isolated the imperialists and their most dangerous lackeys and concentrated the spearhead of the attack on them to overthrow them.

The use of such methods to win bourgeois allies disturbs some of the more radical Communists, not because deception is considered wrong but because they oppose even temporary compromise with the "enemy," the landlords and the bourgeoisie. To them the Party leaders explain that Communists must exercise patience and flexibility. They must be willing to subordinate the "anti-feudalist mission" of the Party to the more immediate needs of the "anti-imperialist mission" of destroying the South Vietnamese government and its allies. Only when this victory is won can the Party afford to proceed with the anti-feudalist mission and "annihilate the feudalist landlords and give land to the tillers." Meanwhile, by joining forces with these "enemies" to accelerate and guide the bourgeois revolution, the Party will hasten their ultimate victory and will more quickly "free" the people from their "exploiters" the "feudalists," "capitalists" and "imperialists" and their "lackeys."

#### POST GENEVA SUBVERSION IN THE SOUTH

As a result of the Geneva truce agreements in 1954, Vietnam was divided along the 17th parallel between the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" (DRV) in the North and the Republic of Vietnam (State of Vietnam) in the South. At this time over 900,000 persons took advantage of the truce terms to flee from the Communist zone to

settle in the South while the Communists moved an estimated 30,000 to 100,000 hard-core Viet Minh soldiers and political cadre, some with families, to the North. Many went North because they were promised by the Viet Minh that they would return South in two years. Less than 5,000 of those going North were processed through the International Control Commission and thousands were moved North forcibly by the Viet Minh.

While most hard-core Communists were withdrawn to the North at this time, several thousand secret agents and guerrillas were left in the South to merge with the population. It was their mission to keep Party activities alive, maintain secret strongholds and prepare for the return of the Communist main forces that was expected after the reunification elections scheduled for 1956 in the Geneva truce terms. To these thousands of Communist agents left in the South were soon added retrained political cadre and guerrilla leaders who began infiltrating back from the North shortly after the original regroupment there.

At the time of partition, few observers expected the government of Ngo Dinh Diem to survive. Diem, however, not only survived the early troubles but for several years was able to build a strong government and an economy that embarrassingly outpaced that of the North. Furthermore, this was achieved despite persistent Communist efforts to sabotage Diem's government, land reform, social services and the large scale resettlement program for refugees from the North. As the government of the South grew stronger, the Communists suffered serious reverses. Diem was quite successful in destroying the Communist's network in some areas, although in others where they had hidden bases or received sufficient aid from the North, their structure survived, though weakened.

The Communist's difficulties during this period are described in a Viet Cong report captured in 1962. This report by a village cadre shows how the Party tried to continue their activities in the South following the division of the country:

During the first years of peace the Party made several attempts to step up its activities. Three times its organization was destroyed by the enemy. Three Party members were killed, two secretaries arrested, more than 100 cadres and members were taken into custody. Finally only one Party member remained and he was driven onto the beach at Luc Binh. He got no help from the local people.

This document makes clear the Party never ended its efforts to destroy the government in the South after the Geneva truce. It also shows the Party received little support from the people. The document does not explain that the "attempts to step up its activities" involved assassination and terrorism, but such activities provided Diem with one of the major reasons for refusing to hold national elections for reunification in 1956.

After finding South Vietnam would not easily fall through elections or subversion as had been anticipated, the Hanoi Party leaders began to plan for reinforcing the southern network. In 1956, the Party Central Committee established a Central Reunification Department in Hanoi to direct the southern operations. From this time Viet Cong terrorism and propaganda steadily increased. In 1958, Le Duan, a top Party Leader, reportedly went South to survey the situation and on his return recommended the creation of a united front for the South.

Le Duan's recommendations were approved by the Lao Dong Party Central Committee in May 1959 but already Hanoi Radio was broadcasting programs to the Southern guerrillas, giving guidance and urging revolt in the name of the "Voice of the Liberation Front." And new support in men and materials was flowing southward. What this meant to the Party there is revealed clearly in the captured Viet Cong document cited earlier:

In 1959, cadres arrived from the higher level [i.e. North Vietnam] to gather the scattered Party members and instruct them in the re-establishment of the destroyed Party base. Things were so difficult at that time that our comrades were forced to hide in the fields and marshes during the day to do propaganda among the farmers. Several farmers were deeply interested in the struggle to get them land and they let themselves be indoctrinated easily. A base was soon established at a farm. Our cadres went on helping the farmer's fight for ownership of certain lands and for the reduction of rent on other pieces. Gradually our victories convinced some of the farmers and we were able to bring into being the [local] Party [chapter] consisting of seven members ... At the present time our organizational strength is as follows: the Party totals 26 members, the Lao Dong Youth 30 [young Communists 18-25 who are candidates for Party

membership<sup>7</sup>, the Farmers Association 27<sup>4</sup>,  
The Liberation Youth Group 150, the  
Liberation Women Group 119; 2,000 people,  
or two-thirds of the villagers, take part  
in Party led activities.

In addition, the Party Chapter had organized a "self-defense" group  
consisting of a "platoon of armed men."

Gradually the Party publicized its new party line for the  
South. In January 1960, North Vietnam's Defense Minister Vo Nguyen  
Giap pointed out in the Party journal Hoc Tap: "The North has  
become a large rear echelon for our army ... The North is the  
revolutionary base for the whole country." At the opening of the  
Third Lao Dong Party Congress in Hanoi in September 1960, Le Duan,  
who had become Party First Secretary (Secretary General) said:

Parallel with the building and consolida-  
tion of North Vietnam, bringing it to  
socialism, our people should endeavor to  
maintain and develop the revolutionary  
forces in South Vietnam....

Le Duan warned, however:

The southern people's struggle will be  
long, drawn out and arduous. It is not  
a simple process but a complicated one,  
combining many varied forms of struggle  
-- from elementary to advanced, legal and  
illegal -- and based on the building of  
the revolutionary forces of the masses.

To carry out this task and "to assure the complete victory  
of the revolutionary struggle in South Vietnam," Le Duan called  
upon "the South Vietnam people, under the leadership of the  
Marxist-Leninist Party and the working class," to "build a worker-  
peasant army coalition bloc, and set up a broad national united  
front against the United States-Diem clique on the basis of the  
worker-peasant alliance."

The new policy was made official in a Resolution passed by  
the Third Party Congress which affirmed:

The common task of the Vietnamese revolu-  
tion at present is: to strengthen the  
unity of all the people, to struggle  
resolutely to maintain peace, to accelerate

the socialist revolution in North Vietnam while at the same time stepping up the national people's democratic revolution in South Vietnam....

Simultaneously with the effort to build the North and advance toward socialism our people must strive to maintain and develop the revolutionary forces in the South and create favorable conditions for peaceful national reunification....

The resolution included clear orders to the Party leaders in the South to create "a broad national united front." Three months later, the "Liberation Radio" announced the formation of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam on December 20, 1960, using language almost identical with that of the Lao Dong Party Resolution.

#### STRATEGY OF DECEPTION: THE LIBERATION FRONT'S TEN POINT PROGRAM

Included in the founding Manifesto of the Liberation Front is a ten-point program presenting the goals of the Front. This manifesto provides an excellent example of the strategy of deception used in the front technique. Read by itself, the Front program is a high-sounding and democratic declaration, as it is intended to be. However, read in the light of similar united front programs issued by the Viet Minh and the Chinese Communists and their subsequent betrayal by the Communists, it can be seen to be a thoroughly deceptive document.

The program states that a primary goal of the front is to institute "a government of national democratic union" but it also states that this will be a "largely liberal and democratic regime."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, while the program states that the "democratic union" is to be "composed of all social classes, of all nationalities, of the various political parties, of all religions," it significantly qualifies this statement by adding that "patriotic eminent citizens must take over for the people the control of

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<sup>1</sup> Translation from Bernard B. Fall, The Two Vietnams, (New York, 1963) pp. 216-221. Underlining is added for emphasis.

economic, political, social and cultural interests." This sentence clearly provides for a takeover by the Party. By usual Communist logic, only Communist leaders could be classed as "patriotic eminent citizens," and the "people" are the peasants and workers for whom the Party claims to be the "vanguard." In view of the brutal purges of bourgeois and other Front allies following the victory of the Communist led fronts in China and North Vietnam, it is not difficult to conceive what would happen in South Vietnam if the Viet Cong were to be victorious.

Similarly, the manifesto promised "essential democratic freedoms" and the "right of all patriotic organizations ... to carry on normal activities." This phraseology permits the same "patriotic eminent citizens" to decide which "democratic freedoms" are "essential," which organizations are "patriotic" and what activities are "normal."

The Front's economic program promised to "suppress the monopolies imposed by the American imperialists and their servants" and to "confiscate to the profit of the nation the properties of the American imperialists and their servants." Since the United States has imposed no monopolies and very few Americans have invested in Vietnam or own property there, this clause is aimed at Vietnamese or Chinese business men, though few if any of them could be termed monopolists. These opened-ended clauses thus would permit the Party to suppress or confiscate any businesses or properties they chose by proclaiming them to be monopolies or by calling their owners "servants of the Americans." Combined with the earlier provision for a "takeover for the people" of the "control of economic, political, social and cultural interests," this provision paves the way for the institution of a socialist economy without technically violating the promises made in the ten-point program of the Front.

The Manifesto is equally devious concerning agrarian reform. It promises to "reduce land rent" and to "implement agrarian reform with the aim of providing land to the tiller." It will also "guarantee to the farmers the right to till the soil," and to "guarantee property rights to those farmers who have already received land." On the other hand, land owned by "American imperialists and their servants" is to be confiscated and distributed to "poor peasants without any land or with insufficient land." Again, since there are virtually no American landowners, the Communists need only to classify anyone they choose as the "servants" of the Americans to confiscate land to "implement agrarian reform" and "to provide land to the tiller."



The Communists' duplicity in regard to "agrarian reform" was clearly evident shortly after the Front published its manifesto. A Hanoi Radio broadcast presented a toned down version less likely to frighten middle-class and landowning elements the Party hoped to entice into the Front. The North Vietnamese "agrarian reform" and the accompanying execution of tens of thousands of "landlords and feudalists" during 1953-56 was well known in the South. Recent captured documents indicate the Party is still restraining over-zealous cadre from confiscating land from southern landowners and rich peasants who might still be useful to the Front. Confiscation and redistribution of lands is being restricted to that belonging "to traitors and officials of the puppet government" according to recent Party directives which emphasize that this policy is only a temporary expediency.

In the cultural field, the Liberation Front will "combat all forms of culture and education enslaved to yankee fashions," and will develop a "progressive" culture and education. In Communist terminology, "progressive" implies a Communist orientation. Any form of art, literature or education that does not foster a Communist outlook is reactionary, even though it is not actively anti-Communist.

In foreign policy, the Front will "develop close solidarity with peace-loving and neutral nations." Especially since World War II the Communists world-wide have used "peace" as a psychological warfare weapon in the Cold War. Facing the frightening power of nuclear weapons in the hands of their "enemy," the United States, the Communists used their organizing abilities to build a climate of public opinion through "peace congresses" and other devices to oppose war and especially the use of nuclear weapons. Out of this effort came such movements as the World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace held in Poland in 1948 and the World Peace Council which worked more to mobilize world public opinion against the United States than they did for peace. Other front groups such as the World Federation of Trade Unions engaged in similar activities that aimed especially to produce a guilt complex among intellectuals and others over the use of nuclear weapons and the maintenance of standing armies for national defense.

However, in the Communist's own system of logic, the state of peace is equated with the state of Communism. Every Communist and Communist nation has the duty to "struggle" until Communism is victorious. Only Communist (or as they call themselves, socialist) nations can be truly "peace-loving" since a nation can be at "peace" internally only when Communism has triumphed over "imperialism and feudalism" within its borders. "Peace-loving" nations

are those working for the victory of communism and the destruction of "imperialist" and "feudalist" nations. The United States is viewed as the arch-imperialist power.

This line of thinking leaves no room for true neutralism. The only nation the Communists consider to be "neutral" are those clearly favorable to Communism and Communist international policies. A nonaligned nation antagonistic to Communist expansionism will be labeled a "henchman of the imperialists" even if it is pursuing socialist or "non-capitalist" policies internally. In accord with this tactic, the Liberation Front and various fellow travelling organizations world-wide have engaged in an intensive and noisy campaign to malign the efforts of the South Vietnamese government and its allies to oppose Communist terrorism and aggression as a "dirty" and "unjust" war. This follows the logic of Lenin who said the use of war and terrorism to spread Communism is "legitimate and 'holy'" but any resort to force to oppose the Communist's activities is "criminal" and "unjust."

The Liberation Front Manifesto refers to "peaceful" reunification, but this is to occur only after control of the South has been won by war. Since 1956 the Party has evinced no expectation of winning the South without fighting a "war of liberation." In April 1959 a prominent North Vietnamese Party leader, Truong Chinh, outlined the steps by which "peaceful reunification" would be achieved. First the Front would destroy the South Vietnamese government and replace it with a "national democratic coalition government" which would then negotiate with the North for reunification. This program was adopted by the Liberation Front.

The role of the North and of the Lao Dong Party in creating and controlling the Liberation Front has been clearly indicated in numerous Viet Cong broadcasts and captured documents. One of the earliest examples was a broadcast by the Liberation Front radio on May 18, 1961. After discussing the Party resolution which had ordered the creation of the Front, the broadcast said:

In general, the above mentioned decision of the Third Congress of the Lao Dong Party concerning the revolution to be carried out in South Vietnam has been correctly executed by the delegate of the Party for South Vietnam and the different echelons of the Party....

In order to meet the exigencies of the revolution and to meet the new situation the revolution faces, all of us -- cadres

and members of the front as well as those who love their fatherland and the revolution in South Vietnam -- must strictly execute the basic and immediate mission determined by the Party.

#### CONTROL STRUCTURE: PARALLEL HIERARCHIES

Prior to the creation of the Liberation Front, the Viet Cong movement in the South was directed through Lao Dong Party channels under the Party's Central Committee Reunification Department in Hanoi. The creation of the Front did not basically change these channels but established a new hierarchy, parallel to the Party structure and completely under Party control. At the top the Party's Reunification Department is paralleled by a DRV government Reunification Commission which operates under the DRV Council of Ministers and consists mainly of top Party leaders. Both the Commission and the Department are headed by Nguyen Van Vinh, a North Vietnamese general with extensive guerrilla experience in the South before 1954.

Until 1961 the Party maintained two military zones in the South, Interzone 5 and the Nambo region, which had been created by the Viet Minh. After the formation of the Front, the number of military and Party zones was increased to six, numbered V through IX with a special Saigon-Cholon-Gia Dinh Zone. Command of all zones was unified under a new Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) apparently headquartered in Tay Ninh Province. The Liberation Front structure was divided into only four zones or regions (including one for the Saigon area), possibly to strengthen the image of the Front as an independent organization.

Under the new organization, COSVN became in effect a branch Lao Dong Party Central Committee for Viet Cong political and military operations. To make the Viet Cong appear to be southern controlled, the formation of a new "Marxist-Leninist" Party, the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), was announced in late 1961. Captured enemy documents make it abundantly clear the PRP is only another name used in the South for the Lao Dong Party which is the only Communist Party in Vietnam and is the successor to the Indochinese Communist Party that included Cambodia and Laos.

As a branch or PRP Central Committee, COSVN guides all Party military and Front activities through a secretariat (Current Affairs Committee) and subordinate functional committees (sections). These sections include: Personnel (Party organization);

Economic and Finance; Propaganda, Culture and Training (indoctrination); Liaison (communications); Military Proselyting (securing defection or infiltration of enemy troops); United Front (civilian proselyting); Bases; Security; and Military Affairs. Under COSVN the same basic structure is repeated at the regional, provincial, district, town or village and hamlet levels.

The basic Party unit is the Party cell of several men. One or more cells in a hamlet or village or town form a Party chapter. Each chapter is controlled by an elected standing committee usually called a current affairs committee. The chapter is a form of local legislature which has all powers when assembled but otherwise delegates its powers to its standing committee. The chapters send delegates to the next higher level and these in turn elect a standing committee for that level and send delegates to the next higher level. The process goes upward through the district, province, region and finally the central or COSVN levels. Each standing committee at each level is headed by a chairman or secretary and is supported by functional sub-committees like the sections of COSVN.

From Ho Chi Minh at the top, down to the lowliest new recruit, every Party member is attached to a cell whose members will usually be approximately equal in Party rank. Since the Party demands total commitment above all other allegiances to family or to nation, the cell within the Party provides a substitute for the family and home. The cell is the basic unit for Party communications, action, training, criticism and self criticism, and for internal Party discipline and intelligence through mutual spying. The criticism and self-criticism serves as a form of group therapy and keeps each member alert to his duty and to the all-consuming demands of the Party. The cell is also an important security system for cell members who are expected to look after each other. It is particularly important in maintaining security and continuity when the Party must work underground.

The Party hierarchy almost exactly parallels, and at each level controls, the entire structure of the Liberation Front. The open or secret Party members hold the decision-making positions in Front organs and usually occupy comparable positions in the Party structure at the same level. Thus an important member of a village Party's Propaganda, Culture and Education Committee will usually hold an influential position in the Village Front Committee for Propaganda, Culture and Education. In many villages where the Viet Cong are strongest, Party committees virtually or totally supplant the Front structure

so the villagers may not be able to distinguish between the two if they are separate. In some villages, the Party has not created a facade of Front committees but directly controls the local mass associations through Party committees.

Between the time of the founding of the Liberation Front in December 1960 and the meeting of its first Congress, February 16 to March 3, 1962, the Liberation Front remained a shadowy organization with no discernible leadership or structure. During this time, periodic radio broadcasts mentioned various associations as members. The First Congress was purportedly attended by representatives of some twelve "revolutionary," "liberation" or "peace" groups or associations and three "political parties." The associations, supposedly representing farmers, youths, women, labor unions, journalists, and religious and other groups, are similar in name and function to the Communist organized "national salvation" groups of the original Viet Minh Front. They are almost identical with the associations listed as members of the Fatherland Front of North Vietnam.

The Fatherland Front was created after partition to replace the Lien Viet Front which was the name used by the Viet Minh for their front after 1951. The Fatherland Front had been created apparently to facilitate the anticipated takeover of South Vietnam by the 1956 elections. When this did not occur, the Liberation Front was created with nearly identical goals to assume the functions of the Fatherland Front in the South.

The Front's three political parties are also identical with those in the North. The PRP, which immediately after its formation proclaimed itself the "vanguard" of the peasants and workers and of the Front, is the Lao Dong Party under a different name. The two other parties, the Radical Socialist and Democratic Parties, claim to represent the intellectuals and the bourgeoisie, respectively, as do the two "non-Communist" parties of the same names in the Fatherland Front.

None of the groups and associations listed as attending the Congress had leaders or known followers of national stature. Most had long records of Communist or fellow-travelling activity if they were known at all. The legal socialist party in Saigon promptly denied any connection with the Front's socialist party. No journalists, labor unions or other groups represented in the Front were willing to acknowledge any connection with Front groups claiming to represent them. Despite the numerous subsequent political upheavals in South Vietnam since the Front was formed, no political or religious leader of significance has defected to

the Front. The Front maintains a "Defense of Buddhism Committee," but even the most anti-government Buddhists have refused to support the Front, despite the setbacks in the Buddhist struggle movement.

Following the Front's first Congress there emerged an organizational structure closely resembling that of the Fatherland Front and of the Party. At the top, the Congress of representatives of all front associations serves as a national legislature. But, as with the Communist Party congresses, the Front Congress meets only briefly and rarely (supposedly once a year) and in the interim delegates its power to a standing committee. Below the central congress are the hierarchy of regional, provincial district, village and hamlet committees. As with the Party, each level has a standing committee and elects representatives to send to the committees at the next higher level.

Heading the Front's Central Committee at the top is a Presidium consisting of a President or Chairman and (since the second Congress) six vice-chairmen and eight members. Below the Presidium is the Secretariat with a Secretary General and four subordinate members.

The Presidium is mainly a policy making body while the Secretariat might be considered as equivalent to the office of a prime minister which supervises and coordinates the work of the Central Committee Departments. These departments consist of a Military Committee, an Information, Cultural and Education Committee, an External Relations Committee (which supervises the Front's foreign missions in Algeria, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Poland, North Korea, the United Arab Republic and the USSR), a Defense of Buddhism Committee, a Public Health Commission and an Inspectors Group.

The thoroughness of the Communist Party control of the Front may be judged by the membership of the Presidium. Nguyen Huu Tho, the Chairman, has a long record of fellow-travelling activities dating at least from 1947, but, as is common with such front groups, he appears to be only a figurehead. Real control of the Front appears to rest with the Secretary General who is also one of the six vice chairmen. Former Secretary Generals Nguyen Van Hieu, Tran Bau Kiem and Huynh Tan Phat the current Secretary General seem to be high Party members. Among the other Vice Chairmen of the Front Presidium, Vo Chi Cong has been reported to be the Secretary General of the People's Revolutionary Party; Tran Van Tra, who also heads the Military Committee of the Front has been reported to be an Assistant Secretary General of

the FRP, Commander of the Liberation Army, and a Lieutenant General and Deputy Chief of Staff of the North Vietnamese Army; Y Binh Aleo is known as a top Party leader among the Montagnard tribesmen; while Phung Van Cung has been reported as a Communist intelligence agent.

After the second Front congress, the Front's Central Committee had 64 allotted seats, but 11 were left vacant. It is not known whether the vacant seats were reserved for future filling from new organizations the Front hoped to form or whether the seats were in fact secretly filled by South Vietnamese who were in the government in the north.

In 1962 a North Vietnamese delegate to the Geneva Conference on Laos mentioned a Nguyen Van Muoi as being a secret Central Committee member engaged in work in "the southern zone." Another prominent South Vietnamese in the north is Premier Pham Van Dong. Among the Central Committee, Presidium and Secretariat members who have been named publicly were politically unknown figures who supposedly represented or headed shadowy Front associations, such as the Patriotic Teachers' Association, the South Vietnam Committee for World Peace, the Committee for the High Plateau Autonomous Movement, the Democratic Party, the Cao Dai (Tien Thien) Sect, the Youth's Liberation Association, Veterans' Association, the Student and School Children's Liberation Association. Also included were representatives of the notorious Binh Xuyen, a gangster and bandit organization whose military forces were destroyed by Diem. Other Central Committee members were given such labels as; Catholic priest, engineer, pharmacist, Khmer intellectual, business man, bourgeois, composer, playwright, Buddhist monk, etc., all carefully chosen to give the impression that the Front represents all classes of the population. One of those labeled as a "journalist" was actually a Viet Cong colonel who merely published a paper for his battalion.

A third parallel hierarchy in the Viet Cong structure is that of the military. In the military field the highest authority appears to stem jointly from the government and the Party in the North. In practice, the Party maintains absolute control of the military as is customary in all Communist regimes. Policy decisions are probably passed down from the Military Affairs Section of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee through the Party's Central Reunification Department to COSVN military headquarters in Tay Ninh Province. Action directives, logistics and supply may be controlled by the North Vietnamese government's National Defense Council headed by Ho Chi Minh through the Council of Ministers, and the Defense Minister, Vo Nguyen Giap, to COSVN's Military Affairs Section and the Military Affairs Committee of the Front.

From the COSVN military headquarters authority channels to the military commands or the six regions and from there through the commands at the province, district, village and hamlet levels. Viet Cong and North Vietnamese main force and regional guerrilla units are probably directed almost exclusively from the regional headquarters, while the lower commands direct local guerrilla and village and hamlet self-defense units and militia.

In theory the Liberation Front's military committees at each level control the armed forces. In fact, the Party totally dominates these committees, following the principle that the Party should control the gun and the gun should never control the Party. Down to the lowest hamlet level the Party is careful never to permit guns in the hands of anyone who is not dependably subordinate to Party directives.

#### ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF FRONT ASSOCIATIONS

Fundamental to the front technique is the organization of associations and groups through which masses of people can be manipulated, indoctrinated and used as fronts and tools for revolutionary activities. The use of such mass organizations is based on the fact that "crowd psychology" makes it easier to influence a group of people than an isolated individual. By using this crowd mentality, which the Communists accentuate by infiltrating secret Communists to simulate and stimulate enthusiasm, Party organizers can lead a group into aggressive activities. At the same time they create a climate of fear to paralyze individual action by the opposition. But, since crowds do not form of themselves, the Party creates and then leads them.

According to Viet Cong propaganda, the Front was organized by a number of associations and groups. In fact, most of these "founding" groups existed only on paper or consisted of a few Party members. The few associations that did exist had been organized by the Party and were under its direction. The creation of the Liberation Front represented an advanced stage of Party activity.

The Party's use of mass organizations results from well-developed techniques. As a numerically small elite group, the Party requires a mass base. Party propagandists and agitators place high priority on leading people into organizing themselves into associations that can be manipulated through crowd psychology. Where possible this is done peacefully, but in Vietnam it has been the result of a clever combination of propaganda and terrorism -- the propaganda sentence punctuated by a bullet. The



most common instrument is the agitprop team, an armed agitation and propaganda squad or platoon which commands the peasant's attention with a gun, persuades him with propaganda and convinces him by an act of terror, such as the assassination of a local government official as a "criminal" or a "lackey of the American imperialists." Where Viet Cong control is strong, mass associations are organized openly by open Party members, usually with the aid of some secret Party men. Where the Viet Cong are weak, small secret groups are formed by covert Party organizers.

To create a nucleus for their organizations within a village, agitators first carefully analyze and classify the population to locate the poorest, most miserable and maladjusted individuals who may be convinced they have grievances against society. Through face-to-face propaganda, these persons are led to turn their frustrations and grievances into hatred and aggressive impulses which are then channeled to serve Party needs. By giving attention to such individuals who feel neglected by society, the Party may turn them into obedient and willing servants, and if they prove capable, into Party members. Once converted, they provide the agitprop team with a base in the village and serve as local agitators to spread the propaganda more widely. Upon such bases front associations may be built gradually.

Once created, front associations serve the Party in many ways. Viet Cong training manuals emphasize the importance of using them for conducting "political struggle" such as organizing demonstrations to disrupt government services, tax collections, military conscription, the building of strategic hamlets or conducting military actions against the Viet Cong armed forces. The associations provide active support to the Viet Cong security network by collecting intelligence on government military activities and strength, and by ferreting out possible opponents, government agents and informers within the village. By tying up each family in an overlapping network of associations, the Party keeps every aspect of an individual's life under observation and control.

The associations are very helpful in creating group pressures that give an air of "voluntaryism" to Viet Cong tax assessments and collections and their ever increasing demands for "contributions" of money, produce or labor. Also through such pressures, youths are induced to enlist in the Viet Cong armed forces. Group psychology is used to force up production and other work norms, to mobilize labor to transport war materials or to construct fortifications for Viet Cong "combat villages." Through the psychological pressures of the group, non-conforming individuals may be brought into line or the whole association may be induced to approve actions they might not normally support. Once the

group is committed to action, Party agitators can play individual members against each other to stimulate competition. Each individual may be pressured from several directions: directly through his membership in one or more associations and indirectly through his wife, children, neighbors and relatives who are also subjected to pressures through their respective associations.

Through a variety of association activities, the farmer, his wife and children are deliberately kept busy in a multitude of tasks. These activities may serve the cause of the revolution but they are also designed to weaken the social institutions, including the family, that traditionally have provided security for the individual in Vietnam. In their place the Party offers a new security in the associations and ultimately in the Party. The multitude of busy work also keeps the individual too physically and emotionally exhausted to effectively resist the constant din of reiterated propaganda slogans. This is part of a technique sometimes called "brainwashing." In a state of fatigue, an individual is less resistant to new ideas, especially when these ideas are pressed constantly in a simple form and the individual is forced to memorize them. In association meetings, when members are led into discussions about political problems, each person is pressed to participate actively. These discussions are used gradually to inculcate socialist ideology and to reinforce understanding of the Communist slogans that are currently being pressed. Villagers are also encouraged to criticize themselves and each other in a constructive way. Properly led, such public confessionals become a form of group therapy and help the Party break down hidden mental resistance to Communist ideology.

The Party endeavors to give the association members the impression they are controlling their own affairs democratically. In fact, open and secret Party members or obedient followers are always placed in strategic positions to place before the meetings the issues they want discussed, and guide discussion to the desired conclusion. If there is resistance, they are backed by the Party which controls the gun. Any individual who tries to oppose the system will soon be quietly advised to mend his ways and all the pressures of the group will be lined up against him. If he still persists, he will be taken away for "re-education" or will be killed, usually in a way that will serve as an example to others. Terrorism may be alternated with friendliness as a psychological device to keep the villagers off balance. Yet, while the threat of force is always in the background, the propagandists usually exert great effort to convince the villagers they want to do what the Party wants them to do.

The Viet Cong consider the Liberation Farmers Association to be the key front group in the rural areas. It is important because the peasant is considered to be a vital element in the revolutionary struggle and because Farmers Associations touch most widely upon

village activities. Next in importance are the Liberation Women's and Youths Association. All three groups are valuable recruiting grounds for Party members. Under Party control, these Associations supplant many normal political, economic and social instruments of the government. They become mutual-aid groups, and serve to organize common farming and village activities such as maintaining irrigation ditches, controlling the use of communal lands or the construction of roads and bridges locally. Since they serve so many local functions, they are all the more useful as an organizational base for the Viet Cong government.

While the Viet Cong exert strong pressure to induce every farmer to seek membership in the Farmers Associations, not all are admitted. Membership is made to appear a privilege but the poorest farmers are given preference. Each applicant undergoes screening, which includes a personal investigation, instruction on the goals of the front and the association, and indoctrination in some fundamental socialist ideas to instil motivation and discipline. Finally, before admission the applicant may be challenged by existing members as to his eligibility. This process stimulates willingness to accept indoctrination and group control. Also it is intended to keep out secret government agents or "feudal" elements such as unredeemed landlords or usurers. Such elements may be forced to join a women's or youth's or other associations to degrade them and also to keep them under close observation.

Liberation Farmers Associations can be organized openly only in Viet Cong controlled or "liberated" areas. In insecure or in "enemy" held areas, secret or semi-secret associations are formed among the peasants who have been secretly proselytized. In the towns and cities, secret groups such as "Laborers' Liberation Associations may be organized among workers in various firms that have been infiltrated. These "Associations" may consist of only a single cell of one or two persons. In schools, Liberation Students Associations are created where students can be propagandized. Similar groups are formed for teachers, journalists, tradesmen, craftsmen and even "progressive employers." As a general catch-all for persons of no specific class or occupation there is a general Liberation Association. For propaganda purposes, Front groups with only a few members may be given impressive titles and be made to appear to have nationwide affiliations and even international connections. However, in addition to the propaganda value the Party squeezes from such front groups, even a single "Association" member in a village may be used to organize non-members to perform Front activities on special occasions.

In recruiting members for covert groups, great care is taken to preserve secrecy. Candidates undergo very thorough screening to avoid infiltration of spies or "feudal" elements. Members are enrolled in small cells and know only their own cell colleagues except for the cell leader who has contact with other cells. Groups of cells are linked together in a pyramid structure so only a very few higher party authorities know the entire organization. The same cell structure is used even in open associations for cell members work together in indoctrination sessions and in the criticism and self criticism used at every level of the Communist structure.

Once individuals are admitted into a group or association, they are subjected to progressive indoctrination much as in a secret society with degrees of secrets. In the beginning the recruit is told only such objectives of the organization as will appeal to him. Gradually the full objectives will be revealed as the recruit proves trustworthy. Only the most trusted Party members within the Front are told of the Party's ultimate goal of creating a collective state in which the peasants will become laborers on state-owned communal farms. All issues are presented in terms most likely to appeal to personal interests. The Party has great faith in the gullibility of the average person, not only among the illiterate masses but also among the more educated. Thus there is little concern for consistency. In making different promises to different individuals or Front groups, the propagandist arouses hopes and ambitions that are positively conflicting, as those between landlords and tenants.

Front indoctrination above all aims to arouse hatred, for hatred can be led into violence. Old frustrations, antagonisms and grievances are dredged up and fanned into hatred against money lenders, landlords, wealthy neighbors, and especially against officials. Every government action is distorted to appear a crime or an evil plot against the people. Spray used by government anti-malaria teams is called "poison" intended to kill children. The government is accused of helping only the rich, yet every government program to help the people is sabotaged. Front associations provide excellent instruments for disseminating such anti-government propaganda since the meetings are made to appear semi-official as the voice of the people. The "sleepers" or secret Communists scattered throughout Front associations make it possible to spread false rumors and to stimulate antagonism against government actions without directly showing the Party's hand. Sleepers also can watch the conduct of other association members when open Party men are absent and can help smoke out dissidents.

A recruit into an association is led into deeper commitment not only by indoctrination, but also by action. Very early he is led to commit acts that are subversive, anti-government or just criminal. With each act he becomes more thoroughly a captive, subject to blackmail at the least. Escape becomes more difficult as he becomes progressively more indoctrinated and committed by action. Often too his family becomes hostage for his good behavior. Many youths who have run away from the Viet Cong forces have been brought back by threats to wipe out their families.

Associations help to fix group responsibility for revolutionary acts. A Farmers' Association may be used to assemble the villagers as a "people's court" for a public trial of a local landlord or official. Agitators whip up the villagers into a frenzy by leading them in unison shouting of slogans and encouraging them to make accusations against the prisoner. Sleepers may make the first charges to set the wheels moving but with sufficient pressure the accusations may become competitive. Villagers who are raised with a belief in ghosts and demons of all kinds do not readily distinguish between fact and fanciful and elaborate "crimes." To give an air of reasonableness, some Party followers may be primed to "defend" the accused, but this may be done in such a way as to make him appear more guilty.

After the villagers have been led to convict and sentence the accused, he may be immediately killed before them. To add to the shock effect, the family of the accused may be killed along with him. This sort of drum head justice implicates the entire village in the murder. It also serves as a frightful lesson to any possible opponent at the same time it eliminates known or possible enemies of the Party.

#### VILLAGE AND HAMLET CONTROL

Although some Viet Cong controlled villages and hamlets are administered directly by the Party through the Associations, Party orders say all are supposed to have locally elected administrative committees. These committees, which are part of the Liberation Front structure, operate parallel to the local Party chapter but under its control. Since the Party places greatest faith in the poorest peasants and works to downgrade the wealthier peasants and landlords, the village and hamlet committees exclude most members of the traditional leader group. These were the village notables who had won local prestige and prosperity through wisdom, scholarly achievement or success in farming or business.

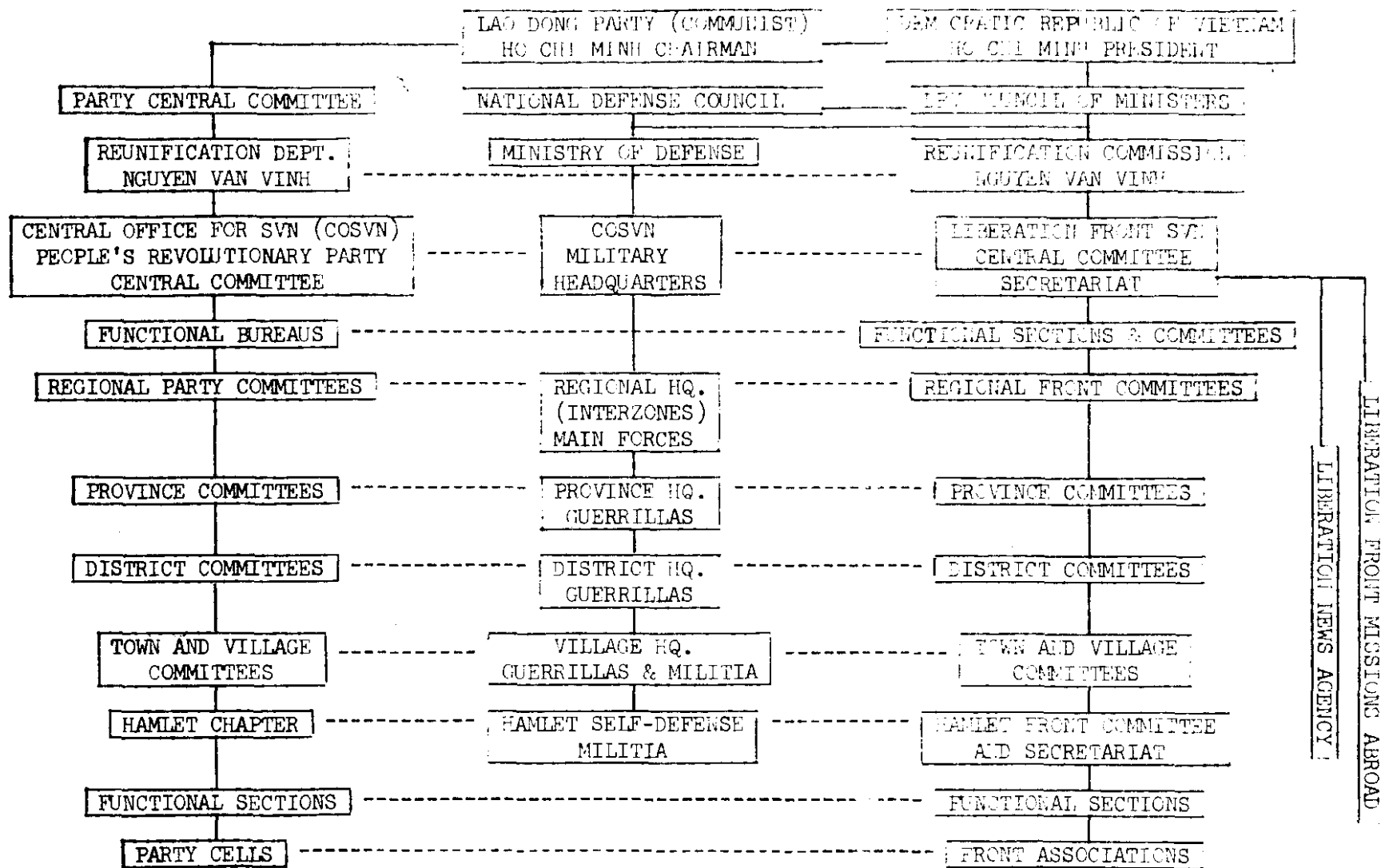
The local Front committees consist of 15 to 25 persons with a secretariat (chairman, deputy chairman and clerk) and a number of functional sub-committees or sections. The latter usually include sections for Front activities, economic and financial affairs, security, propaganda, culture and education, military affairs, military proselyting and civilian labor. Because the Party's control and inter-relationship is so close, villagers do not always distinguish between them. In most cases the head or deputy-chief of the secretariat or a section will be a Party member belonging to a Party chapter committee with the same functions. He is thus able to guide Front activities in accordance with Party directives. In some cases sleepers are used to disguise Party control over certain areas of functions. If a non-Party member is the chief of any section, his deputy will usually be a Party man or the reverse situation will prevail. Party members covertly scattered through the structure make it possible for the Party to quickly revive the structure if the open Party organization is destroyed by government police or military action.

The functions of the sections resemble those of any local government organs, but with some additions. The economic and finance section not only controls local finances but extracts support for the Front activities at a higher level, including support of the war. It classifies the population, ostensibly for tax purposes, but also for future "class struggle" and land redistribution. Information passed up to district, provincial and higher levels is used to make general tax assessments which are passed down to lower levels to execute. The economic and finance section is expected to introduce gradually the earlier stages of "agrarian reform" by working to reduce land rents, interest rates on loans and by distributing among the poor peasants common lands and lands deserted by the larger landlords or other refugees from the Viet Cong areas. In some areas, overeager Communist cadre have seized land from local landlords for distribution but such action is condemned as premature by Party leaders since it disrupts production and frightens too many of the more prosperous peasants.

The Front section will include representatives of the local Front associations for -- farmers, women, youth, Buddhists, fishermen, woodcutters, etc. These groups provide important communications and control channels by which the Party and the Front reach every element within the community. The security section can use these channels to organize a spy and counter-espionage network and to develop its dossiers on every local inhabitant -- noting who are active Front supporters and who are passive or possibly opponents. By a thorough check of each family history, the security section finds who have relatives in government held areas or relatives in the government armed forces. Such information will be used by the

military proselyting section to get such relatives to defect to the Viet Cong or to serve as Viet Cong agents within the government forces. Many government posts have been betrayed from within by such tactics. The security section also controls all communications between the village and the outside world. Letters are censored, and villagers must secure passes to leave the village. This control of population movement may also be used to enforce the economic warfare policies of the Party and the Front by cutting off the flow of food from the village to the city.

The propaganda, culture and education section directs Front and Party propaganda and indoctrination; operates local schools to assure the curriculum indoctrinates the youth; organizes local entertainment to combine amusement with propaganda; publishes propaganda newspapers and bulletin boards; and makes visits to individual homes for face-to-face propaganda. The military section controls the local self-defense group and any village or hamlet guerrilla unit. The civilian labor section organizes (through the associations) labor for Front or Party projects such as digging communal irrigation facilities or providing labor for constructing fortifications, tunnels or transporting military supplies.



# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE VIET CONG

THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY, PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY AND LIBERATION FRONT

\_\_\_\_\_ DIRECT CONTROL CHANNELS

----- PARALLEL PARTY CONTROL CHANNELS



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THE VIET CONG: FIVE STEPS IN RUNNING A REVOLUTION

ABSTRACT

A composite description of Communist Party manuals on organizing and operating a revolution at the local cadre level. Captured documents consistently emphasize five revolutionary tasks: (1) investigation of the subject to find weak points which are then exploited by (2) propaganda to win the subject's support, after which follows their (3) organization into front groups and the (4) training of the most zealous into new leaders and finally the leading of the groups into (5) revolutionary struggle which escalates from peaceful demonstration to armed attacks on the government.

## INTRODUCTION

To generate and run a revolution as the Communist Party has done in South Vietnam through front organizations like the Liberation Front requires mass following and large numbers of trained personnel. The Party must constantly work to increase its support and to recruit new revolutionaries with leadership potential. These must be won over, indoctrinated, trained and then guided to further proselyting. To strengthen this program, the Viet Cong (Viet Communist) are continually producing instruction manuals and directives for their cadre (the activist leaders who push the Party's activities at every level.)

Many Viet Cong training manuals have been captured. They reveal a common pattern and make quite clear that the Liberation Front and its member associations were organized by and are led by Communist Party members. These documents make clear too the People's Revolutionary Party, as the Party is called in the South, is the same party as that called the Lao Dong Party in North Vietnam. Most of the documents, however, ignore such subtleties as the use of different names in the South and the North and merely refer to the Party. When a manual writer wishes to avoid direct reference to the Party he may refer to it as the "Group."

Another common pattern observed in the Viet Cong training manuals is the emphasis on the "promotion method," which involves the Party's "five revolutionary tasks" or the "five steps in the operation of a revolution." These five tasks or steps -- investigation, propaganda, organization, training and struggle -- are explained in detail in some manuals and merely referred to as common knowledge in others. Because these manuals explain the techniques by which the Communists achieve control over large groups of people in South Vietnam, Laos and other areas where there are "national liberation movements," they are worth examining in some detail.

## INVESTIGATION

According to the manuals, any revolutionary mission should be preceded by investigation and study. In "proselyting" or attempting to win over any individual, great or small, or in infiltrating a group, organization, factory, village or town, the revolutionary agitator must first carefully investigate, study and analyze the object of his mission. In the case of an individual, the cadre is to find out his social class, family origin, life, activities, attitudes toward the revolution and toward the "enemy" /the government and its

supporters/ and his present aspirations and problems. The object is to find out whether the individual is "good or bad and what talents he has that can be used in the revolutionary task, or to devise plans to deal with him if he is a bad person and is harmful to the Party." Of special concern are his activities in relation to the recent years of the "resistance" movement and to seek out any weakness to be exploited.

An organization, school, factory or village will be investigated with the same thoroughness. The structure, purpose, activities and personnel of an organization or institution will be studied. In a village or local area, the geographical situation and characteristics, the way of life, state of mind, traditions and habits of the people and the status of the government's activities, organization, personnel and strength will be examined. In each case the cadre will try to ferret out possible opening chinks into which he may start his propaganda. He will look for any "contradictions" or points of difference between the government and the people such as government errors, unfair actions or evidence of corruption by officials that might be used to create or exploit popular discontent. Other contradictions might be antagonisms between an employer and his employees, between teachers and students, village chief and villagers or landlord and tenants. The propaganda cadre must also be alert for signs of secret government agents or any organizations and operations plans that might be harmful to the Party's interests.

Careful instructions are issued on direct and indirect investigations, on being cautious not to arouse suspicions, on being patient and enduring hardships to investigate a long time when necessary. Cadre are warned to show concern for the attitudes of the "laboring masses." They must not allow themselves to become "subjective" or make decisions based on personal feelings. Lastly they must never be too easily satisfied

Due to the complex nature of the revolutionary task and the daily developments in our society, our investigation and study should never be stopped and satisfied ... The success of an investigation by revolutionary cadre is dependent upon good attitude and standpoint, rather than method or proper technique.

## PROPAGANDA

After completing his investigation the Viet Cong cadre begins his revolutionary propaganda, exploiting all grievances and sources of discontent he has discovered. His object is to stir up anger against officials, landlords, money lenders, employers, teachers or any other suitable antagonists against whom the agitator can create an awareness of real or fancied grievances. Once a spark of awareness is lit it is fanned into indignation, and indignation into hatred and hatred is channeled into revolutionary "struggle."

Communist training documents explain frankly:

Without wide and deep propaganda action it is impossible to make the masses become aware of their interests, to become indignant, and turn their indignation into a powerful force to defeat the enemy.

The documents explain that this technique is not new:

Through the period of covert party activity, nine years of resistance and seven years of political struggle in South Vietnam, propaganda always played a very important role in the awakening and motivation of the people.

Recent instruction manuals make no effort to conceal the dominant role of the Communist Party. The propagandist is told to "conduct propaganda on the righteous cause of the Party" and to win "respect and sympathy for the Party" and to induce people "to detest the capitalist regime and resolutely fight under the leadership of the Party." He is instructed to praise the Party's power, influence and deeds and its capabilities for leading the "worker class." At the same time he is to convince them "that socialism in North Vietnam is a good system" and to explain its connections with "worldwide socialism."

The propagandists is advised "to find propaganda slogans suitable ... for each place, each period of time." Every effort is to made to appeal to personal interests. Propaganda lines must be flexible, shifted to meet changing circumstances and to exploit new openings:

Every day we must maintain close relations with the people and search for the people's aspirations and needs, so exact slogans can

be brought out, because these subjects will come from the people's actual rights and interests. The people will only join the revolution when appropriate slogans are used....

The propagandist must work continually and never miss an opportunity. Even if he is captured, he must propagandize his fellow prisoners and his captors and jailors:

Every day, a cadre of the Party in charge of propagandizing the masses must unveil the barbarous and cruel face of the [enemy] to the population so they can be aware of their pitiless plot and plundering activities, warfare and eager preparation to turn South Vietnam into a U.S. colony.

Sometimes the Communists make converts in unlikely places. When the "Red Prince" of Laos, Prince Souvanouvong, leader of the Pathet Lao in Laos was jailed in Vientiane, he and his fellow prisoners escaped by subverting their guards who fled with them.

Verbal or oral propaganda is advised as the most effective, both in clandestine and open activities. Verbal propaganda is more flexible and more easily adjusted to each situation and individual. It can be passed through chains of friends and relatives to create changes in public opinion difficult for the opposition to combat. Propagandists are told to spread rumors secretly by engaging in conversations in buses, markets and other public places. Raising arguments and voicing complaints against high prices, unemployment, bad officials or by making demands for free labor activity, the propagandist makes certain such conversations will be overheard and will be spread as rumors.

Leaflets, booklets, pictures, slogans and other printed propaganda are used but are considered less effective than oral propaganda. The propagandist is warned to make certain his documents are pertinent to the place and occasion and not to hand out printed materials indiscriminantly.

#### ORGANIZATION

Organization is to be started after the period of investigation and propagandizing. The cadre are told:

The strength of struggle against the enemy

comes from organization. For, without organization, no matter how numerous they may be, the people have no strength. To investigate and propagandize but not to organize is to till and sow but not to reap.

The Viet Cong's revolutionary front organizations may be open, semi-open or secret, according to local needs and Party instructions. They may serve several different purposes. They may be organized "to create conditions for a wider range of propaganda activities," to "make indoctrination and propaganda more fruitful," to "heighten the people's revolutionary capabilities," to carry on "political struggle" to undermine or disrupt the government and/or to provide secure bases and support for armed action against the government. Not specifically mentioned in the manuals and instructions, but tacitly understood, is the use of the front organizations as instruments for controlling the population and for screening out or neutralizing elements opposed to Viet Cong activities.

Organizations are created to touch upon, observe and control every aspect of life. They operate at different levels according to needs. Some may be a simple gathering of volley ball players music listeners, laborers, woodcutters, etc., without formal organization. When circumstances permit, such groups are given "organizational form, internal regulations and a leadership system with Party cadre in charge and distinctive work assignments ...". Once it is strongly organized, such a group might be directed into "struggle" activities such as sending petitions, demonstrating, or building defenses against government "repression." Eventually similar groups in different areas will be linked together in regional associations.

Cadre are supposed to work carefully to make the creation of such organizations appear spontaneous. In areas not under complete Viet Cong control, secret Party members do the investigating, propagandizing and organizing by infiltrating the particular population element to be subverted. In Viet Cong controlled or "liberated" areas the organization may be led by secret or open Party members or a combination of the two as the situation requires.

Whether in open or covert operations, the cadre are instructed to first ascertain what kind of organization might attract the most popular interest. Once this is determined the Party assigns key cadre to sell the idea to the people "to make them realize the advantages of the organization so they will volunteer to join it and remain with it ...". Out of those most receptive, a steering committee is formed under party guidance. The cadre are warned to be sure the



the people are properly motivated, that the purpose and organizational form does not deviate from Party goals, that it is approved by the people and that no rigid orders are issued. Finally, when the group work is laid, the people are assembled and the establishment of the organization is "announced." Thereafter follows election of administrative committees and drawing up of rules.

Once the organization is operating it becomes a recruiting ground for new cadre. Individual members who show capacity and susceptibility are gradually indoctrinated and trained into the Party system. The same process occurs when the organization is undertaken by secret Party members. They are told to "choose receptive people in these organizations and turn them into ... secret positive Party members and key cadre...."

In situations where security is uncertain and both secret and open Party cadre are used as organizers, they are advised to "know how to distinguish the overt from the covert mission and to know how to carry out both." In overt missions, Party members and cadre are cautioned to promote the prestige of the Party and the Front among the people by providing effective leadership and by their exemplary conduct. In covert situations, the secret Party cadre "should not contact one another. They should keep their own secret system. In case of open meetings, Party members and the secret system should avoid separate discussion."

## TRAINING

In Communist parlance, training includes both the training of cadre and Party members and the indoctrination of their followers. However, the emphasis is on the "education of each individual so he can become a good cadre or Party member." Those who excel in group indoctrination sessions are selected for further leadership training.

The cadre is the sparkplug of any Communist or front activity. He must present an example of perpetual, unflagging enthusiasm and energy. One training manual quotes "Comrade Stalin" as saying, "With capable cadre, everything can be done. To have capable cadre, the training of cadre should be carried out properly." This requires continual indoctrination, not merely to develop cadre, but also to keep them highly motivated. The whole Communist Party apparatus is attuned to this need for constant indoctrination of Party members at every level.

Party leaders must always watch for individuals with leadership potential. Possible candidates include those who have proven effective and enthusiastic in carrying out front activity and Party chores, who show a sense of responsibility and an ability to influence others. Such people receive special attention to draw them more deeply into front or Party activity. As their commitment and capability increase they are given more indoctrination. Gradually they are converted, through the Party's psychologically oriented training program, into highly motivated Party workers, subject to "iron" discipline, able to follow orders explicitly, yet to adapt to changing circumstances. As they develop, they are encouraged to request admission into the Liberation Youth, the Party feeder organization. After suitable apprenticeship there, they become probationary Party members and finally full members. This process normally takes at least two years but now it is being accelerated because of the heavy drain from war casualties and defections. This short-circuiting of the usual careful training and indoctrination of cadre is producing less competent and more poorly motivated cadre who are less able to win and hold the people of the villages.

### STRUGGLE

"Struggle" is a Communist term used to cover a variety of revolutionary activities ranging from peaceful persuasion to armed uprisings. The importance of struggle is much emphasized in Communist literature, especially that of Communist China and North Vietnam. One Viet Cong training manual explains:

In society where there is class there is struggle, because the imperialists and the feudalist ruling class [The South Vietnamese government and its supporters] always suppresses and exploits workers and farmers and other classes....

Struggle is the rule of life and a sole means to crush the enemy ... With struggle we can build our forces, consolidate and develop the organization, the Front, train the people and enhance our prestige to be able to topple down the enemy ... Struggle is the most violent fighting of the revolutionary people against the enemy....

Struggle is the final step toward which the other four were directed. "The struggle will not be successful unless it is under the leadership of the Party and has policy line, force, plan and method." Party cadre are told to struggle constantly to develop a revolutionary spirit among the people, to teach them to be dissatisfied, to arouse them to indignation and hatred so they can be led to struggle against the "imperialists and feudalists." By struggling, the people will "develop their force to annihilate the enemy." The cadre must teach the people to look to the Party for leadership so the Party can educate them as to what they should desire and then to direct their struggle to achieve those desires.

The alert cadre must keep up popular zeal for struggle by inventing new slogans and generating new themes for hatred. Among the slogans recommended for use in rural areas are: "oppose the enemy's terrorism [used against the government's reactions to Viet Cong terrorism]; oppose the expropriation of the people's land [used against government land reform or against the construction of air-field, etc.]; oppose construction of strategic hamlets [which were created to protect the people from Viet Cong terrorism]. Other slogans are aimed to undermine the government tax collection, military conscription or other activities the Viet Cong wish to obstruct.

In the cities, slogans are keyed to city needs and interests. They may demand free organizations of labor unions, student councils, press freedom, or abolition of government regulations that restrict Viet Cong activities. Front groups are told to struggle for improved living condition, tax reductions, pay increases, job security, full employment, unemployment insurance and any other demands that might attract popular support.

Cadre are instructed to plan any struggle activity as a general would plan a battle. In planning for a demonstration, for example, they should study the weaknesses and strength of the enemy forces and of their own.. They should be careful to fully motivate and train all the people then lead into struggle. They must plan for main forces, support forces, self-defense forces, lines of retreat, and all other aspects of the operation. Primary and secondary slogans are developed with contingency plans for a shift of tactics to cope with new eventualities or to exploit unforeseen opportunities. The methods to be used and the level of the struggle, whether peaceful or violent, must depend upon circumstances, but the action must be kept completely under the control of the cadre at all times.

In a demonstration, the main forces are drawn from those persons most directly involved in the particular issue. Thus in a demonstration against conscription, the immediate families of conscripts would be put in the forefront. There, under the guidance and control of trained

agitators they will "talk to the enemy" and start disturbances as required. Behind them is a larger force of the "masses" divided into the main support force, the mutual assistance force and reinforcements. Each member of the main support force has a special mission. Some may be assigned to persuade government police and soldiers or subordinate officers to help or at least not oppose the strugglers. Others will try to get the soldier's dependents to join the demonstration. If newspaper reporters are expected, some demonstrators will be assigned to win their sympathy.

The mutual assistance force tries to get broader participation from other classes not directly involved in the particular struggle. This force also assists persons injured in the struggle. The reinforcements are drawn from the relatives of members of the main force. The self-defense force is sent into a demonstration when violence is expected and desired.

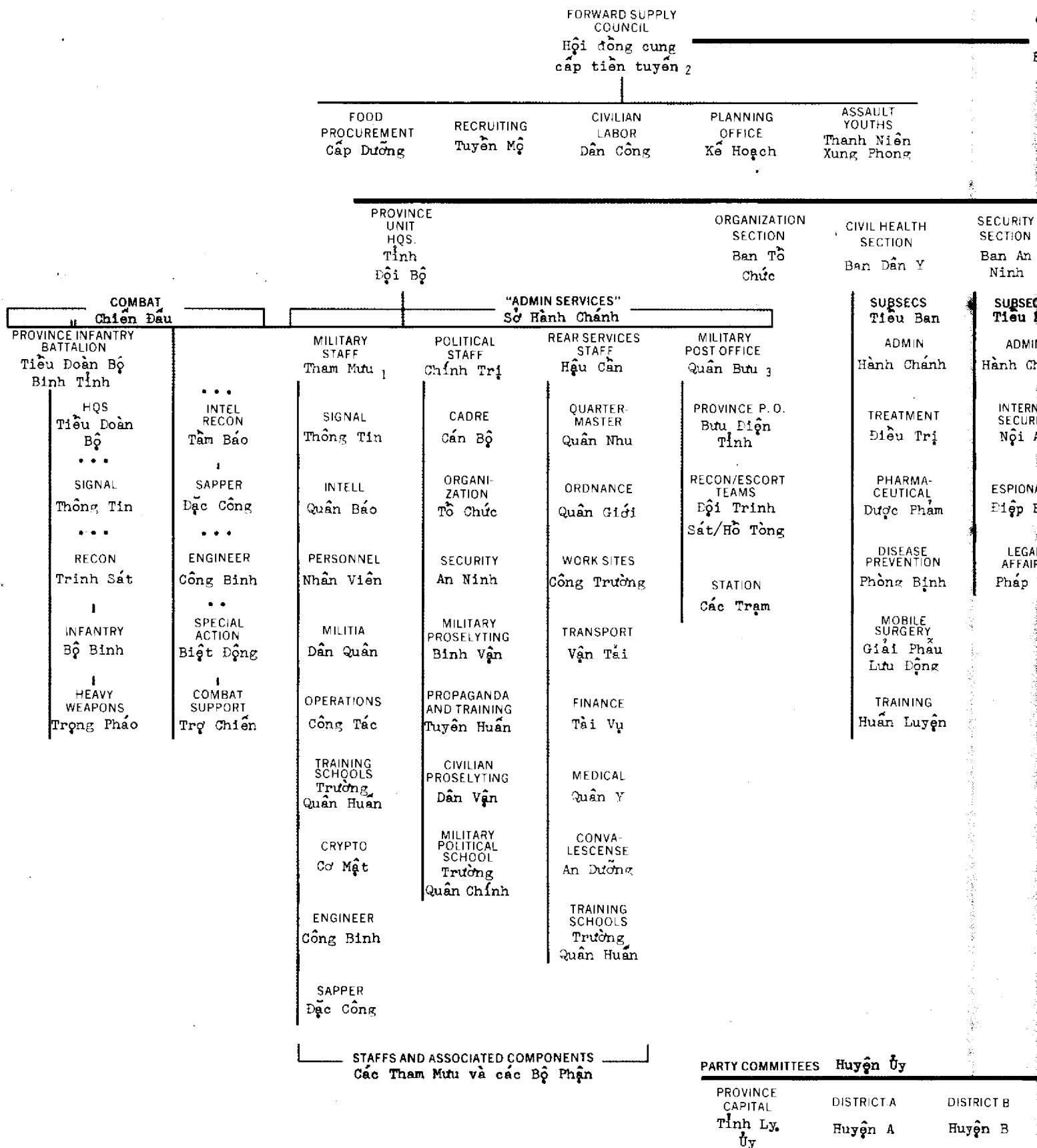
A demonstration or major struggle activity is planned by a Party leadership committee and is coordinated and kept tightly controlled by cadre who are strategically placed among the demonstrators. The participants are brought into the planning and are invited to make suggestions for the Party aims to make the demonstration appear to be an expression of popular will. After the struggle is completed and a quick and orderly retreat has been accomplished, the event is subjected to a searching critique. The cadre must see what can be gained by the experience, they must correct mistakes, analyze deficiencies, encourage the people and enhance their enthusiasm, reward those who did well and correct and punish those who failed.

It is neither expected nor desired that struggle should remain peaceful. Violence and hardship are the anvils upon which better revolutionaries are tempered. This is positively stated in the training manuals, as in the following:

In order to annihilate the reactionary class, struggle should be protracted and full of hardship. Only with long lasting hardship can we split the enemy, make the people become conscious of the development of the real revolutionary force. Escapism, shrinking, fear of hardship, difficulties and death ... hinder the struggle ... 'Struggle to develop strength and develop strength to struggle.' Our objective is to overthrow the imperialists and feudalists, to build socialism and communism....

# A COMPOSITE VIET CONG PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATION

## HỆ THỐNG TỔ CHỨC CỦA VIỆT CỘNG CẤP TỈNH



PROVINCE PARTY  
COMMITTEE

Tỉnh ủy

CURRENT AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

Ban Thường Vụ

ADMIN  
OFFICE

Văn Phòng

PERSONNEL  
Nhân Viên

CLERICAL  
COMPONENT  
Công Văn

SIGNAL  
COMPONENT  
Ban Thông  
Tin

CRYPTO  
COMPONENT  
Ban Cơ Mật

SECURITY  
GUARD  
Bảo Vệ

SECURITY  
SECTION

Ban An  
Ninh

SUBSECS  
Tiểu Ban

ADMIN  
Hành Chánh

INTERNAL  
SECURITY  
Nội An

ESPIONAGE  
Điệp Báo

LEGAL  
AFFAIRS  
Pháp Vụ

MILITARY  
PROSELYTING  
SECTION  
Ban Binh  
Vận

SUBSECS  
Tiểu Ban

ADMIN  
Hành Chánh

PROPAGANDA  
Tuyên  
Truyền

OFFICER  
Quân Sĩ

FIFTH  
COLUMNIST  
Nội Tuyên

DETENTION  
Trại Giam

TRAINING  
Huấn Luyện

PROPAGANDA  
AND  
TRAINING  
SECTION  
Ban Tuyên  
Huấn

SUBSECS  
Tiểu Ban

ADMIN  
Hành Chánh

PROPAGANDA  
Tuyên  
Truyền

TRAINING  
Huấn Luyện

EDUCATION  
Giáo Dục

PRINTING  
Ấn Lót

ENTER-  
TAINMENT  
Văn Nghệ

FINANCE  
AND  
ECONOMY  
SECTION  
Ban Kinh  
Tài

SUBSECS  
Tiểu Ban

ADMIN  
Hành Chánh

FINANCE  
Tài Chánh

FARM  
PRODUCTION  
Nông Sản

TRADE  
Mậu Dịch

PROCUREMENT  
Thu Mua

POLITICAL  
STRUGGLE  
SECTION  
Ban Đấu  
Tranh  
Chính Trị

CIVILIAN  
PROSELYTING  
SECTION  
Ban Dân  
Vận

SUBSECS  
Tiểu Ban

FARMER'S  
Nông Dân

YOUTH  
Thanh  
Niên

WOMEN'S  
Phu Nữ

OTHER  
Các Tiểu  
Ban Khác

NLF COMMITTEE

Ủy Ban Mặt Trận  
Dân Tộc Giải Phóng  
Miền Nam Việt Nam<sub>4</sub>

ASSOCS  
Đoàn Thể

FARMER'S  
Nông Dân

YOUTH  
Thanh  
Niên

WOMEN'S  
Phu Nữ

OTHER  
Các Loàn  
Thể Khác

COMMENTS

This chart represents a composite Viet Cong organization at province level.  
No province organization is exactly like the chart. All resemble it.

FOOTNOTES

1. Some components displayed here as subordinate to the staffs would be better described as "associated" with them.
2. In some provinces, the Forward Supply Council has been abolished, its functions have been taken over by other bureaucracies.
3. In some provinces, the Postal Transport and Communication Section, a civilian bureaucracy directly subordinate to the Current Affairs Committee, performs the functions of the Military Post Office.
4. The relationship of the Civilian Proselyting Section, the National Liberation Front (NLF) Committee, and the Associations under them, as displayed here, is schematic. In some provinces, there is no Civilian Proselyting Section, and the Association Subsections have Section status. In any case, the NLF at province level is almost entirely a paper organization.

Nhận Xét:

Bản sơ đồ này trình bày Toàn Thể Hệ Thống Tổ Chức của Việt Cộng cấp Tỉnh. Không phải tổ chức cấp tỉnh nào cũng thái độ giống hệt như trong sơ đồ, nhưng các tỉnh đều có một tổ chức tương tự như vậy.

Chú Thích:

1. Có một số bộ phận, nhìn trong sơ đồ thì là trực thuộc Tỉnh bộ, nhưng nói là liên hệ với tỉnh bộ thì đúng hơn.
2. Có những Tỉnh đã bãi bỏ hội đồng cung cấp Tiền Tuyên và nhiệm vụ của hội đồng do cơ quan khác đảm trách.
3. Có một số Tỉnh, Ban giao bưu vận, một cơ quan dân sự trực thuộc ban thường vụ, thì hành nhiệm vụ của một ban quân bưu.
4. Sự liên quan giữa ban dân vận, ủy ban mặt trận giải phóng và các đoàn thể trực thuộc, như trình bày trong sơ đồ chỉ là một hình thức. Một số tỉnh không có ban dân vận và tiểu ban của toàn thể quần chúng giữ vai trò của một ban. Dù sao mặt trận cấp tỉnh gần như hoàn toàn là một tổ chức trên giấy tờ.

DISTRICT B

DISTRICT C

DISTRICT D

DISTRICT E

DISTRICT F

Huyện B

Huyện C

Huyện D

Huyện E

Huyện F